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AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE: PATH TO PEACE AND STABILITY

DR SHANTHIE MARIET D'SOUZA

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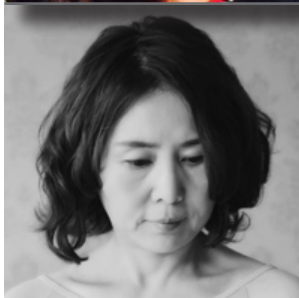
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Cover photograph of snow leopard, the national animal of Afghanistan, by Skeeze, USA
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Afghanistan's Economic Imperative : Path to peace and stability Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza

Dr. D'Souza is researcher, analyst, writer, editor, consultant, adviser and subject matter expert with specialisation in International Relations (IR), Afghanistan and South Asia. She is Associate Editor, Journal of Asian Security & International Affairs (Sage Publications); Expert and Contributor to the Middle East-Asia Project (MAP) at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC; Senior Analyst, South Asia desk, Wikistrat Analytic Community, New York; Advisor, Independent Conflict Research & Analysis (ICRA), London; She has conducted field visits to various provinces of Afghanistan since 2007. www.mantraya.org



The Blue Village Mikyoung Cha

Mikyoung Cha is a graduate in Oriental Painting from Hyosung Women's University, Daegu, South Korea. She has participated in a number of group art exhibitions in South Korea and Japan. For a number of years she assisted her husband in landscape designing and recently took up photography – the camera becoming her paint brush. This photo feature is a first in a series.



Persian Poetry in the park Zeeshan Khan

Khan is a journalist, currently working in communications with the International Organisation for Migration. He was born in the UK and raised in Bangladesh, but spent a part of his childhood in Mauritius. He studied in Canada and Australia and worked in Europe before returning to Bangladesh, where he currently resides. He is passionate about history, religions, cultures and languages, and has an active interest in mysticism, particularly in Sufism. He is also interested in international and current affairs and writes about these for a living as a journalist.



The Reflection of Swat Crisis in Folk Poetry Dr Altaf Qadir

Qadir is Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Peshawar, where he joined as a lecturer. He is a Life Member of the Pakistan Historical Society. Qadir served as Lecturer in history for about three years in the Department of Higher Education (Colleges), Government of former North-West Frontier Province. he has published two books and numerous articles.



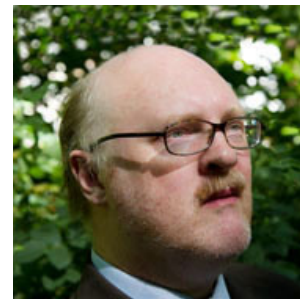
After Conflict: Memory Frictions in Timor-Leste and Aceh Dr Lia Kent

Dr Lia Kent is a Fellow in the School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet) and a member of the Centre for International Governance and Justice (CIGJ). Prior to joining RegNet she was a Research Fellow at ANU's State, Society and Governance in Melanesia (SSGM) program for four and a half years. Dr Kent's book, *The Dynamics of Transitional Justice: International Models and Local Realities in East Timor* (Routledge 2012), is based on her PhD thesis, and interrogates the gap between the official claims made for transitional justice and local expectations.



Internally Displaced Persons at Bannu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Gulzar Ali

Mariana is currently a PhD candidate in Politics at the New School for Social Research, in New York. She received her Bachelor of Laws and Master's in Political Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. In her doctoral research, Mariana offers a map of women's rights discourse production and circulation in the trans-national legal sphere. Her research has been supported by various institutions, such as the Brazilian Ministry of Education (CAPES), Fulbright, and the American Association for University Women (AAUW).



Against The One Percent David Morgan

David Morgan is a London based journalist with interests in politics, human rights, international relations, history and cultural issues. He has been working in journalism as an editor and writer for three decades after he studied literature and history at university. He has edited several titles from the Socialist History Society (SHS) of which he is the Secretary. He writes regularly for the SHS Newsletter, occasionally for the Morning Star newspaper and for a range of other online and printed publications.



Weaving intellectual property Miranda Forsyth

Miranda Forsyth, is an Associate Professor at RegNet and also a Fellow at SSGM in the College of Asia and Pacific at ANU. In July 2015 she completed a three year ARC Discovery funded project investigating the impact of intellectual property laws on development in Pacific Island countries. Before coming to the ANU, Miranda was a senior lecturer in criminal law at the law school of the University of the South Pacific, based in Port Vila, Vanuatu. She is the author of *A Bird that Flies with Two Wings: Kastom and State Justice Systems in Vanuatu* (2009) and co-author of *Weaving Intellectual Property Policy in Small island Developing States* (2015).



Narco Diplomacy Boh Ze Kai

Boh Ze Kai will soon be pursuing his undergraduate degree in History & Politics from Jesus College, Oxford University. His areas of interest include conflict analysis and resolution, geopolitical strategy and diplomacy in South Asia and the world. He has interned at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Singapore and the Middle East Institute of the National University of Singapore. At Mantraya.org, Kai is associated with the 'Borderlands'.



A Coup in Brazil, Despite Legal Formalities Mariana Prandini Assis and Pablo Holmes

Mariana is currently a PhD candidate in Politics at the New School for Social Research, in New York. She received her Bachelor of Laws and Master's in Political Science from the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil. In her doctoral research, Mariana offers a map of women's rights discourse production and circulation in the trans-national legal sphere. Her research has been supported by various institutions, such as the Brazilian Ministry of Education (CAPES), Fulbright, and the American Association for University Women (AAUW).



Acma - Turkish Style Soft Bagels Ozlem Warren

International cooking teacher and Turkish culinary expert Ozlem Warren is a native of Turkey, lived there and extensively travelled for 30 years. She has been teaching wholesome, delicious Turkish cookery in the US, Jordan, Istanbul and England. Her recipes have been published in the local media in England, Hurriyet and Sabah national daily newspapers in Turkey. Ozlem also took part at the *"Turkish Chefs of the World"*, *"Dunyanin Turk Seftleri"* TV program aired at TRT, National Turkish TV channel and in 37 countries. www.ozlemsturkishtable.com



Stray Cats Mark Ulyseas

He is the author of two books: *RAINY – My friend & Philosopher* and *Seductive Avatars of Maya – Anthology of Dystopian Lives*. His third book - *In Gethsemane: Transcripts of a Journey* is being released in July 2016. <http://www.amazon.com/author/markulyseas>



Dr. D'Souza is researcher, analyst, writer, editor, consultant, adviser and subject matter expert with specialisation in International Relations (IR), Afghanistan and South Asia. She is Associate Editor, Journal of Asian Security & International Affairs (Sage Publications); Expert and Contributor to the Middle East-Asia Project (MAP) at the Middle East Institute, Washington DC; Senior Analyst, South Asia desk, Wikistrat Analytic Community, New York; Advisor, Independent Conflict Research & Analysis (ICRA), London;. She has been a Fulbright Fellow at South Asia Studies, The Paul H Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC and more. She has conducted field visits to various provinces of Afghanistan since 2007. For further details see www.mantraya.org

AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC IMPERATIVE: PATH TO PEACE AND STABILITY

Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza¹

President & Founder

www.mantraya.org

Abstract

As the narratives of pessimism and doom prevail about the future of Afghanistan, alternate approaches to achieving peace and stability in the conflict ravaged country have hardly been explored. Much of the debate on transition (inteqal) in Afghanistan has been dominated by the security approach of the need to quell the Taliban led insurgency. Civilian capacity building, institution building, economic opportunities, trade, transit and investment that has the potential to transform the country from being an aid-dependent state to a self-sustaining economy, has received scant attention. As Afghanistan traverses a challenging path, the economic stabilisation will be critical to bring in long-term peace and stability.

The *inteqal* (transition) process assumes that Afghanistan will continue to be an aid-dependent state, in need of international financial assistance to sustain its economy, security and development initiatives for at least another decade. Stability in the war-torn country was thereby inherently linked to a secure and uninterrupted flow of international financial assistance to shore up the country's own efforts at utilizing its own resources and capabilities to fend for itself. While the latter remains a project in progress, international financial assistance and commitment has dwindled, posing perhaps a greater danger than the expanding Taliban led insurgency² to Afghanistan's stability.

In February 2016, the Obama administration proposed US \$2.5 billion in financial assistance to Afghanistan to reinforce the country's security and development. Aid to support democracy, governance and civil society dropped by more than 50 per cent and from US\$231 million to US\$93 million and the allocation of support for "rule of law" dropped from US\$43 million to US\$16 million.⁴ In 2012, the World Bank had warned that such a drop in aid-giving 'could lead to major macroeconomic instability and serious socio-economic consequences.'

Contrary to Afghan government's November 2011 estimate³, it requires US\$120 billion (at the rate of US\$10 billion per year) in aid in the post-2014 period, through 2025, at the Tokyo summit in July 2012, however, international community promised to give a meagre US\$16 billion through 2015 to build its economy and make necessary reforms. Even the development assistance from US, the largest donor, has dropped from US\$3.5 billion in 2010 to about US\$2 billion in 2011 and has remained at that level over the subsequent years. In February 2016, the Obama administration proposed US \$2.5 billion in financial assistance to Afghanistan to reinforce the country's security and development. Aid to support democracy, governance and civil society dropped by more than 50 per cent and from US\$231 million to US\$93 million and the allocation of support for "rule of law" dropped from US\$43 million to US\$16 million.⁴ In 2012, the World Bank had warned that such a drop in aid-giving 'could lead to major macroeconomic instability and serious socio-economic consequences.' Amidst such a precarious situation, exploring avenues for revenue generation, trade, foreign investment and development of indigenous economic base remains critical to compensate for such shrinkage of external support.

The intrinsic nature of aid-giving and execution of development projects through contracts and sub-contracting, has done little to build on state capacities or local ownership. Afghanistan's problem essentially lies in the lack of 'unity of effort' (UoE) on the part of the international community in developing a well-coordinated and long-term strategy to build and strengthen the institutions and 'bring the state back' into the development process. In rebuilding conflict-ridden states like Afghanistan, aid-delivery through 'alternate delivery mechanisms' like the international Organisations and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) or direct delivery through embassies, and community-based groups plays a crucial role in providing immediate humanitarian relief and assistance but in the long term have not been helpful in building state institutions of service delivery and implementation. This has impacted on credibility of the state which has worked into the insurgent propaganda of "an ineffective state" or "puppet regime".

The impact of the shrinkage on Afghanistan's economic growth, fiscal sustainability and service delivery is being slowly felt now. The pull out of international troops has led to the loss of 100,000 jobs in the transport sector alone, which had contributed about 22 percent of Afghanistan's GDP. The construction sector and services connected to it had been driven by US military contracts and accounted for 40 percent of GDP.⁵ Afghanistan's current state of economic growth, a large chunk of which was driven by the money flowing into the economy from jobs and contracts connected to the US military, has crashed too. It declined to 1.3 percent in 2014, which is a steep fall from an average of 6.9 percent from 2007 to 2012. The average yearly income per person has declined from US\$730 in 2013 to US\$680 the following year.

The second Bonn conference on 'Afghanistan and the International Community: From Transition to the Transformation Decade' held in December 2011 set an extended period of international assistance, 2014-24 and termed it the 'transformational decade', the contours of international assistance and engagement remain highly unclear.



<https://pixabay.com/en/afghanistan-children-carrots-crop-79526/>

The World Bank's 2016 "Doing Business" report ranked Afghanistan at 177 in a list of 189 economies for the ease of doing business⁶, a decline of two positions from the 2015 ranking. In fact, the ranking has consistently declined since 2012, when it was 168. The huge international spending in Afghanistan over the past decade has dramatically raised domestic prices (particularly of skilled workers and residential/commercial properties) that the country is no longer export-competitive vis-a-vis other South Asian countries. While real estate boom in Kabul was a visible sign, often mistakenly described as an indicator of Afghanistan's progress, the high salaries paid to government employees by all means was unrealistic and unsustainable. It artificially created a huge divide among the Afghans who remained dependent on the traditional sectors of economy and those who enjoyed the benefits of the international development assistance. At least in this respect, the gradual scaling down of foreign spending might help lower prices closer to 'South Asian levels', which may help Afghanistan in increasing its exports although 'transit' issues will still remain a challenge.

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Attempts have also been made to link the prospect of Afghan's self-reliant economic future to its resource potential. The discovery of huge troves of minerals and natural gas has raised hopes of possibility of revenue generation, foreign investment and employment opportunities. The mineral and hydrocarbon sectors are estimated to be worth at between US\$1 and US\$3 trillion. The Mes Aynak copper mines located in the Logar province, just 25 miles southeast of Kabul, for example, is estimated to hold six million tons of copper and is worth tens of billions of dollars.



<https://pixabay.com/en/afghanistan-merchant-man-village-79490/>

A series of international conferences seems to miss the crucial point that stabilising Afghanistan by devising quick-fix solutions and setting arbitrary timelines do not meet the needs on the ground. A successful transition is contingent on the continued, albeit slow, growth in the administrative capacity of government ministries, and on improvements in local governance, civil service, development and employment opportunities at the provincial and district level.

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In November 2007, a 30-year lease was granted to the China Metallurgical Group (MCC) for US\$3 billion, making it the biggest foreign investment and private business venture in Afghanistan's history. However, the project still remains mired in controversy. According to a July 2015 report, "delays have plagued the ambitious project, though

Building on the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) series initiated in 2005 – and held in Kabul, New Delhi, Islamabad, Istanbul, and Dushanbe – RECCA-VI, was held in Kabul on 3-4 September 2015. Preceding the high-level Ministerial Meeting on 4 September, an Academic Forum and a Regional Business Forum, held on 3 September engaged scholars and business representatives from across the region and beyond around critical regional economic cooperation themes, including in the areas of trade & transport, energy & resource corridors, streamlining customs & border crossings, and attracting investment & technical know-how from the private sector.

the government claims 7,000 jobs are being created, with a \$1.2 billion impact on the national economy."⁷

The first Afghanistan International Investment Conference (AIIC) was held on 30 November 2010 in Dubai. The AIIC took place following a series of high-level international meetings on Afghanistan in 2010, most notably in London, Kabul, Istanbul, and Lisbon. It was followed by the Brussels Euro Mines Conference of 26 October 2011. Both the AIIC and the Brussels Conference aimed at promoting economic investment in Afghanistan and made valuable recommendations. But they essentially put the onus for investment on actions to be initiated by Afghanistan, which was an exaggerated expectation from a country reeling from a host of challenges. The 28 June 2012 Delhi Investment Summit on Afghanistan, on the other hand, taking into consideration the realities and needs on the ground, explored near-term and long-term possibilities in the current environment and at the same time, sought a mechanism to address the needs of foreign and private sector investors and the government of Afghanistan. This is reflective in the efforts geared to catalyse investment decisions and forge cross-country and international partnerships to promote cooperation and greater collective confidence. A collective view of security for foreign investors emerged from the reality of venturing together, rather than individual investors risking an uncertain environment all by themselves.

Afghanistan's tragedy lies in the fact that time and again its internal contradictions have got trapped in the external power agenda. A regional consensus by forging greater cooperation is seen as a way out of the imbroglio. One way of building a cooperative regional architecture is through greater trade and transit, investment opportunities, including energy pipelines. The Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia, held on 2 November 2011, provided a new agenda for regional cooperation, by placing Afghanistan at its centre and engaging the 'Heart of Asia' countries in sincere and result-oriented cooperation for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, as well as a secure and prosperous region as a whole. The emphasis for the first time on a regionally owned process led by Afghanistan, with support and collaboration from its near and extended neighbours, would make this effort 'sustainable and irreversible' in the long term.

Building on the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) series initiated in 2005 – and held in Kabul, New Delhi, Islamabad, Istanbul, and Dushanbe – RECCA-VI, was held in Kabul on 3-4 September 2015. Preceding the high-level Ministerial Meeting on 4 September, an Academic Forum and a Regional Business Forum, held on 3 September engaged scholars and business representatives from across the region and beyond around critical regional economic cooperation themes, including in the areas of trade & transport, energy & resource corridors, streamlining customs & border crossings, and attracting investment & technical know-how from the private sector.

Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline is another regional collaborative venture that has enormous potential of bringing in economic dividends through mutually beneficial regional cooperation. According to an estimate by the Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, the TAPI project would not only provide jobs to thousands of Afghans, but would result in annual gain of US\$500 million to the Afghan economy.⁸

The narrative has thus been gradually shifting to regional confidence-building, development, governance, and most lately, trade, transit and investment, aiming to use the country's resource- and transit- potential to build its economic viability, sustainability and self- reliance.

The long term economic benefits, revenue and employment opportunities arising out of investment, trade and transit would help build 'constituencies of peace'. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline is another regional collaborative venture that has enormous potential of bringing in economic dividends through mutually beneficial regional cooperation. According to an estimate by the Afghanistan's Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, the TAPI project would not only provide jobs to thousands of Afghans, but would result in annual gain of US\$500 million to the Afghan economy.⁸ By forging a greater stake and regional commitment to rebuilding Afghanistan through alternate economic opportunities, foreign investment and local development strategies, capitalising on Afghanistan's location, energy and mineral resources in a mutually interdependent regional framework, could pave the way out of the stability-instability paradox.

Pessimism about Afghanistan's future, would thus be premature. The World Bank predicts Afghanistan's economic growth to rise steadily for the next few years. Noteworthy milestones have been achieved in health and education sectors.

The training and equipping the Afghan military appears to have been a modest success given that a rising insurgency from the Taliban and other groups including the Islamic State have been somewhat successfully dealt with. As Afghanistan traverses a difficult course of transition, there is an immediate need to bridge the perception gap between the Afghans and the international community to build on the gains and address the immediate areas of concern.

A unified vision and effort of putting Afghans in the lead for rebuilding their state and society, which remains the missing link in the decade-long international engagement in Afghanistan, needs priority emphasis. It is critical to set realistic timetables on drawdown based on conditions on the ground. Shoring up the state's capacities and institutions through long-term international commitment, provision of economic opportunities and greater regional integration would remain the key to achieving durable peace and stability in Afghanistan.

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Notes

1. Dr Shanthie Mariet D'Souza is President & Founder, Mantraya.org, . The author's views and findings are based on her interactions, discussions and interviews with serving and former ministers, potential presidential contenders, government officials, members of think tanks, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, women's groups, entrepreneurs and locals during her field visits to Afghanistan between May 2007 and March 2016.
2. The Taliban led insurgency is a loosely affiliated, and diffused units comprising of multiple networks of anti-government armed groups; followers of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's radical group Hizb-e-Islami; the Haqqani network; Al Qaeda and its affiliates; religious clerics; narcotic traffickers; tribal militias; and self-interested spoilers in the Pakistani tribal areas. While these groups may not all share the political goals of the Taliban, they do share a common agenda in preventing or limiting the writ of the state authority. This inference was derived from interviews, briefings, and discussions with the government officials, security personnel, academia, media persons, and aid workers in various Afghan provinces from May 2007–March 2016. For further details on the insurgency, see Seth G. Jones, Counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, Arlington: RAND Counterinsurgency Study, vol. 4, 2008; Antonio Giustozzi, Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008; Ahmed Rashid, Descent into Chaos: How the war against Islamic extremism is being lost in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 240–61; Shanthie Mariet D'Souza, Taliban: The Rebels Who Aspire to be Rulers, Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs (JASIA), Sage publications, April 2016.
3. Towards a Self-Sustaining Afghanistan, An Economic Transition Strategy, Speech of President Hamid Karzai, Bonn Conference, Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 29 November 2011, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/604482/publicationFile/162938/Economic_Side_Event_Towards_a_Self_Sustaining_Afghanistan.pdf. Accessed on 24 March 2013.
4. Julian Borger, 'Afghanistan conference promises support after troop withdrawal', The Guardian, 5 December 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/dec/05/afghanistan-conference-support-troop-withdrawal>. Accessed on 21 March 2013.
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8. "Afghanistan Would Annually Benefit \$500 Through TAPI Project, Noori", Bakhtar News, [http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/business/item/20287-afghanistan-would-annually-benefit-\\$500-through-tapi-project-noori.html](http://www.bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/business/item/20287-afghanistan-would-annually-benefit-$500-through-tapi-project-noori.html). Accessed on 24 June 2016.



THE BLUE VILLAGE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MIKYOUNG CHA

These are glimpses of *Chefchaouen* in Morocco, which I visited a few months ago.

The Moroccans call this place *Chaouen*, which refers to the mountain tops above the town that look like two horns, *Chaoua* of a goat. Chef Chaouen comes from the Berber word for horns, *Ichawen*. It was founded in 1471 in the embrace of the Rif mountains by Moors and Jews who fled Spain.

One theory as to why the houses are blue is that the Jews introduced the blue when they took refuge from Hitler in the 1930s. The blue is said to symbolize the sky and heaven, and serve as a reminder to lead a spiritual life.



Deserted medina of Chefchaouen.



Deserted medina of Chefchaouen.



Moroccan men wearing the traditional Djellaba.



Deserted medina of Chefchaouen.



Pigments on sale.



Deserted medina of Chefchaouen.



Cats in the medina of Chefchaouen.



Khboz, Moroccan bread.



Shop in the Medina.



Zeeshan Khan is a journalist, currently working in communications with the International Organisation for Migration. He was born in the UK and raised in Bangladesh, but spent a part of his childhood in Mauritius. He studied in Canada and Australia and worked in Europe before returning to Bangladesh, where he currently resides. He is passionate about history, religions, cultures and languages, and has an active interest in mysticism, particularly in Sufism. He is also interested in international and current affairs and writes about these for a living as a journalist. Zeeshan is obsessed with overland travel.

Zeeshan Khan Persian Poetry in the Park

An excerpt from page number 313-319 of Chapter 9 *A Gate for all Nations: Persian Poetry in the Park* from the book *Right to Passage* by Zeeshan Khan, published by **SAGE**

It's impossible to get away from Hafez if you love mystical poetry. You wouldn't want to either, in fact you would do your very best to become as wrapped up in him as possible. Kobiguru Robindronath Thakur was a fan as well and visited his tomb in 1932, following which he wrote:

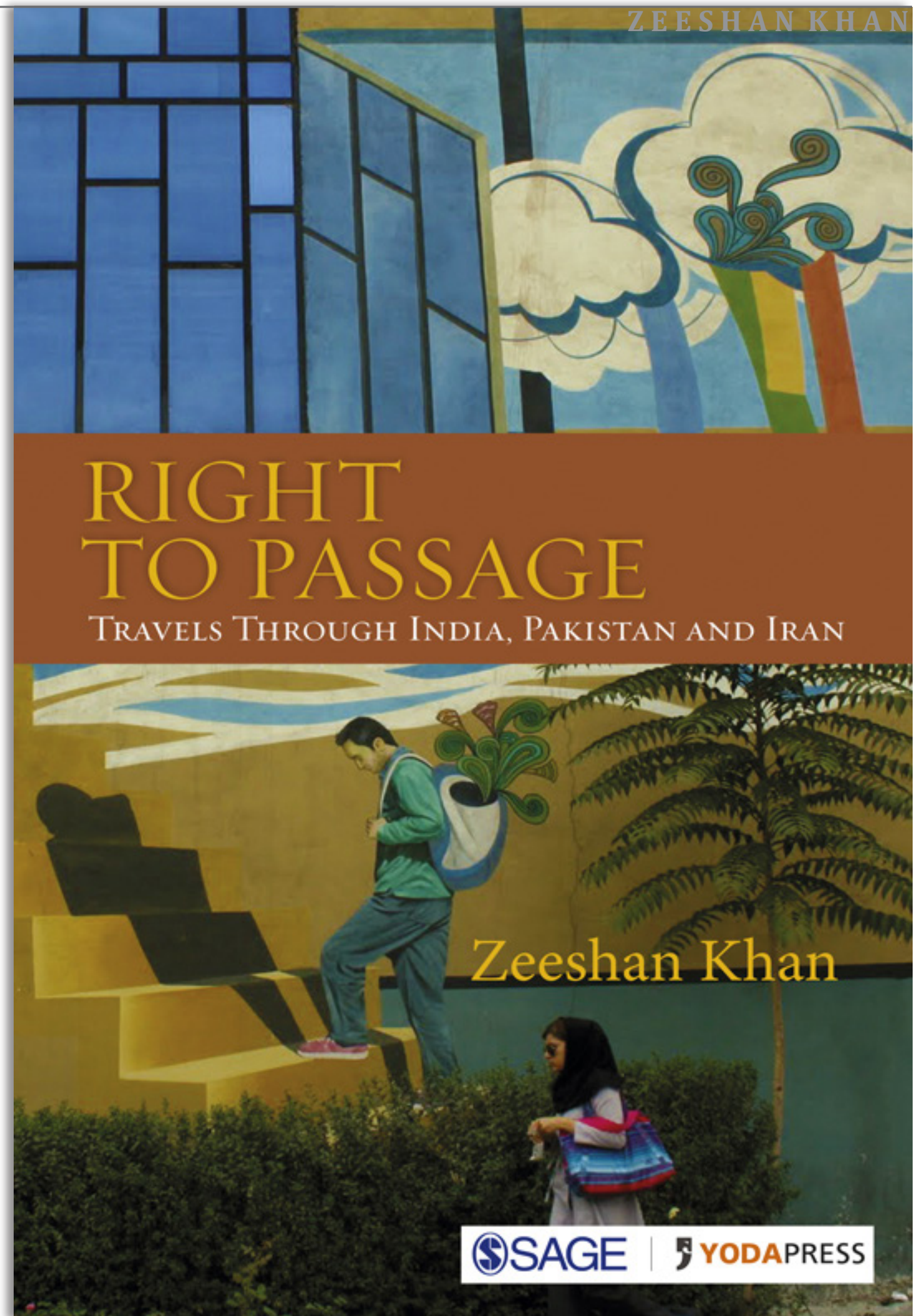
Sitting near the tomb, a signal flashed through my mind, a signal from the bright and smiling eyes of the poet on a long past spring day – akin to the springtime sunshine of today. We were, as it were, companions in the same tavern savouring together many cups of many flavours. I had the distinct feeling that after a lapse of many centuries, across the span of many deaths and births, sitting near this tomb was another wayfarer who had bound a bond with Hafez.

The Bengali poet came to Iran as Shah Reza Pahlavi's guest - a grand king showing his appreciation for a great mind. Five centuries earlier a Bengali Shah, Ghiyasuddin Azam, did the Iranian poet a similar honour by inviting him to his country for precisely the same reason. Hafez never left Iran in all his life and declined the invitation, but to show his gratitude he sent Ghiyasuddin a ghazal which is said to have been included in the Divan later. The two may have even co-authored the ghazal - a story has it that Ghiyasuddin sent incomplete lines to Hafez, which Hafez finished and sent back. It read:

*Vin bahas ba salase ghasaleh mi ravad
Shekar shekan shavand hamah totiane hind
Zin qande parsi keh beh bangaleh mi ravad.*

Meaning,

This debate continues over three cups of wine
And all the parrots of Hindustan have become sugar greedy
At the thought of this Persian candy going to Bengal.



In 1390, Khawaja Shamsuddin Muhammed Hafez gave up the ghost and became an immortal. He almost became a god and, not unlike the Bengali Thakur that loved him, went on to become the measure of a civilisation's soul. But very little is known about Hafez the historical character. It's supposed that he was born between 1315 and 1317 and spent the last years of his life in a Persia firmly under Amir Timur's hold. According to at least one legend he may even have met the conqueror, who chastised him for a poem in which he wrote that he would happily trade the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara for a mole on a beautiful Shirazi's cheek.

Whether or not this was co-authored is quite possibly a bit of wishful thinking by later historians, but it underlines how prominently Hafez features in the cultural context of his Age, not least among the kings of my country.

I had expected to be alone with him, or perhaps with a just few other people. As I approach the tomb complex, I notice a huddle of chadors standing beneath a large banner that says '*Hafez Day 12.10.2011*'. They look like an outing of schoolgirls and seem very excited about being here. Many more people, all in their good clothes, push past me as they go towards the tomb. Some are carrying flowers. A man in a suit is making announcements over a microphone and rows of chairs have been laid out facing a lectern in front of Hafez's grave. Television film crews are filing in. I seem to have managed to arrive, quite by coincidence if there is such a thing, (and there isn't), at Hafez's tomb on Hafez Day – the day that Iran sets aside to venerate the poet - and just in time to be part of the of-ficial celebrations at his tomb. I muse about the many ways that this might never have happened. If Marco and I had managed to get seats on the bus from Yazd I would have arrived here days ago and left. Or maybe I wouldn't have delayed my trip from Kashan to go into the desert, again, I would have been gone by now. Even earlier, when Sana left for Shiraz I had thought about going with her, but didn't because I decided to smoke hash with Jemima and Balal instead. And finally, today before I left the guesthouse, I had briefly considered doing something else and coming here tomorrow.

But here I am at this august occasion, like very many others. Some people seem to be here out of a sense of tradition, maybe even obligation, others appear to be here to be seen and to mingle among members of a cultural class they probably aspire to belong to. In front rows, people, especially women, fiddle with their clothes and compare their bags to see if they look sufficiently sophisticated and put on their best affected face. The presence of photographers and television cameras doesn't help much either as the posing carries on unabashedly. But for the most part, there is a genuine reverence of the great poet, and oratory tributes are being flung from the lectern to any and everyone that will have them. Behind it sits Hafez's column-ringed grave, covered in elegant marble and calligraphy.

In 1390, Khawaja Shamsuddin Muhammed Hafez gave up the ghost and became an immortal. He almost became a god and, not unlike the Bengali Thakur that loved him, went on to become the measure of a civilisation's soul. But very little is known about Hafez the historical character. It's supposed that he was born between 1315 and 1317 and spent the last years of his life in a Persia firmly under Amir Timur's hold. According to at least one legend he may even have met the conqueror, who chastised him for a poem in which he wrote that he would happily trade the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara for a mole on a beautiful Shirazi's cheek. Timur took particular offence at this, since he was from Samarkand and ruled both of those cities.

Hafez had an exceptional memory, which of course is why he was called Hafez, and memorised tomes, like the works of Rumi, Attar, fellow Shirazi Saadi and the Quran. He began public life as theological scholar, but quickly moved towards mysticism, causing an upset in the conservative court of Mubariz Muzaffar which promptly threw him out. He returned to royal patronage under the rule of Mubariz's son Shah Shuja who was a poet himself and allowed him to flourish as both an artist and a mystic. Hafez grew enormously during this period and exploited the Persian poetic tradition of mystical lyricism to become one of its greatest proponents.

How can you give away so cheaply cities that are so glorious that I have subjugated the whole world to set them on top of it?

He asked, and the poet replied,

It's just the sort of extravagance that keeps me in poverty, my Lord.

Hafez had an exceptional memory, which of course is why he was called Hafez, and memorised tomes, like the works of Rumi, Attar, fellow Shirazi Saadi and the Quran. He began public life as theological scholar, but quickly moved towards mysticism, causing an upset in the conservative court of Mubariz Muzaffar which promptly threw him out. He returned to royal patronage under the rule of Mubariz's son Shah Shuja who was a poet himself and allowed him to flourish as both an artist and a mystic. Hafez grew enormously during this period and exploited the Persian poetic tradition of mystical lyricism to become one of its greatest proponents.

More and more people arrive as the ceremony continues; nearly all of them carry a copy of the *Divan* and read it silently or out loud, wherever they are in the tomb complex. The *Hafezieh*, as it's called, is a large enclosure with the tomb in the centre of it and landscaped gardens all around. It has a paved area and places to sit and eat; there are *chaikhanehs* as well and an art gallery at one end too, with an exhibition on. A single cloister runs perpendicular to a long walkway. The grave itself is housed in what looks like a tall gazebo with slender columns and a blue-green dome, the inside of which is covered with exquisite tile-work arranged in kaleidoscopic patterns. People fill the small space underneath the dome. Prayers are pronounced over the marble grave, flowers are laid, tears shed. The emotions are raw, as though he was just interred, and as evening approaches people stand in a sort of silent remembrance interspersed with occasional chants. Maghrib prayers are held in congregation shortly after.

Then it really begins. As night falls, coloured lights are turned on to produce a mystical atmosphere, which complements the recitations that are being dramatically delivered by writers and poets from the podium in front of the grave. There are loudspeakers and musical interludes. The audience hoots, whistles and cheers, and a chorus of '*Bah! Bah!*' bellows across the park. Others sit or stand next to lights so that they can keep reading the *Diwan*; many have their hands over their hearts and are absolutely still, as though stunned into solemnity by the power of the words they ingest. Expressions of intense adoration adorn their young faces; most of them look younger than me. A calligrapher sits against a wall along the edges and creates intricate masterpieces using a bamboo pen.

‘This is Persianness at it’s most native self’ I think to myself, but can only experience it vicariously as the language barrier keeps me out, and entirely unable to dive into this churning ocean of inspiration. But the emotions don’t escape me; I can experience them by what they’re doing to the audience: they sway, and cry - entire families together - and hold each other as the profundity of the poetic panacea passes through them.

He’s absorbed in his work and a girl sits next to him holding his cup of tea as she watches him. Every so often his hand flourishes off the page leaving behind elegant black strokes that stride boldly across the paper.

People talk softly like they’re telling secrets and flash full-faced smiles at each other. There’s a bo-hemian feel to the whole occasion and several times I felt like I was at *Bokultola*, at Art College in Dhaka, listening to a Baul musician pour out his soul under an evening sky in Spring. *‘This is Persianness at it’s most native self’* I think to myself, but can only experience it vicariously as the language barrier keeps me out, and entirely unable to dive into this churning ocean of inspiration. But the emotions don’t escape me; I can experience them by what they’re doing to the audience: they sway, and cry - entire families together - and hold each other as the profundity of the poetic panacea passes through them. Its deeply moving and I can only guess what’s being said, but perhaps it’s this:

*I have a thousand brilliant lies
For the question:
How are you?*

*I have a thousand brilliant lies
For the question:
What is God?*

*If you think that the Truth can be known
From words,*

If you think that the Sun and the Ocean

*Can pass through that tiny opening
Called the mouth*

*O someone should start laughing!
Someone should start wildly laughing now!*

Hafez, like Khayyam, ran into trouble with the orthodoxy to the extent that he was almost denied a Muslim burial, but he was too loved and too popular for that to have ever become a reality, and even now, more that 600 years later, he occupies an incontrovertible station in Iranian life as the Seer of Shiraz. No one else, not Khayyam, not Rumi, not Saadi nor Attar is held in such high re-gard, though I’m not sure why, since any one of them seem equally deserving. But then I’m not Persian and I’m sure there’s something in the language that doesn’t quite translate.

Or this:

I have come into this world to experience this:

*men so true to love they would rather die before speaking
an unkind word. Men so true their lives are His covenant -
the promise of hope.*

I have come into this world to see this:

*the sword drop from men’s’ hands even at the height of
their rage because we have finally realised
there is just one flesh we can wound.*

Hafez, like Khayyam, ran into trouble with the orthodoxy to the extent that he was almost denied a Muslim burial, but he was too loved and too popular for that to have ever become a reality, and even now, more that 600 years later, he occupies an incontrovertible station in Iranian life as the Seer of Shiraz. No one else, not Khayyam, not Rumi, not Saadi nor Attar is held in such high re-gard, though I’m not sure why, since any one of them seem equally deserving. But then I’m not Persian and I’m sure there’s something in the language that doesn’t quite translate.

The ceremony continues well into the night and shows no sign of slowing down, but I’m tired and its after 1 am so I gradually make my way towards the exit. On the way out, the smell of charred corn cooking over open coals at a food cart tempts me, so I stop to indulge in one. A lot of others are doing the same and as I stand in line, I watch children play between their parents’ legs, quietly, as though they are being careful not to shatter the serenity of the evening. The sound of poetry and music continues in the background as people come out to go home bearing blissful expressions. They are almost lucid, having imbibed the wine that Hafez has pressed for them, and wear their intoxication in the form of a luminous, velvety afterglow.



Left: Desan, Utror Kalam Swat valley, photograph by Adilswati
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=42311953>



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The Reflection of Swat Crisis in Folk Poetry

Introduction

Swat crisis is one of the gloomy events of Pakistan which has deeply influenced and still influencing the daily lives of the people of Swat. The crisis has been interpreted by different people according to their understanding on the basis of academic training, political affiliation, religious orientation, social and economic background. Apart from the academics and political activists there is a very sensitive class of poets who look to the crisis from their own perspective. Though these poets have different social background, diverse religious and political orientation but they have one point in commonality. They feel the sufferings of the common people and express in their poetry. The poetry of tribal people is more valuable as compare to the poetry of the civilization centres. Hence the poets of Swat have first-hand information and express their feelings on the basis of known facts. They are not victim of media and propaganda of either actor of the crisis. They observe their surroundings minutely with their unique style and sensitivity. Their poetry, during and after the crisis is full of such events which have been faced by the people of Swat. They have composed poems regarding the miseries of the people when they were compelled to vacate their homes. They have also indicated the people and institutions responsible for the crisis. At times they criticize their leaders and at others they put the responsibility of crisis on clergy and the state actors. On one side they presented the hardships of the people during the crisis, while on other side they draw a sketch of the humiliating behaviour of the security personals. They have also suggested solution while emphasizing on education, unity and discipline.

The present paper is an attempt to bring into limelight some glimpses of the poetry of crisis. The field survey was conducted and poets were met privately. The main focus remained on Kabal area of Swat. We have focused on those poets who have not published their works due to different constraints. They belong to different social backgrounds and are mostly from poor families. Few of them are illiterate and none of them is university degree holder.

Interrelationship of Poetry and History

Poetry is considered one of the oldest forms of expression. Human race has found it much easier to express and memorise the verses instead of prose. The ever evolving social structure has affected the poets along with others and they have depicted their feelings accordingly; sometime they express progressivism while sometime adapts to conventionalism, even he goes to the extreme to infuse revolutionary zeal in the mind of youth and resistance to rise against the totalitarian tendencies. To sum up, literature has played its positive role in portraying the social and political life in human history.¹ Poetry plays an important role in every era, thus poets are called the eyes of a nation.² History and poetry were linked long before Aristotle's time. Homer's *Iliad* in 8th century B.C., is the story of Trojan War that had taken place hundreds of years before.³

Aristotle was also enormously influential in the content of literature and draws a sharp distinction between history and poetry. He has the opinion that history and poetry are clearly distinguished by one obvious thing, that the history relates "what has been" and the poetry "what might be". He thus make a seemingly unremarkable demarcation of their chronological concerns with the past assigned to history, and poetry allotted some hypothetical present and future, but he claims that poetry is chiefly conversant about general truth and history about particular.⁴

A purposeless poetry is valueless in comparison to the poetry which contains specific purpose and thought to some specific ideology of nations; and the latter is linked to the national development and plays important role to prove helpful in planning the future destiny of a nation, such poetry proves valuable to give evidences to historians.⁵

NOTES

1. Hakeemullah, “Pushto Ghazal Par 9/11 key Asaraat”, in *Pakistani Zaban wa Adab par 9/11 key Asaraat*, conference proceeding, held 7-11 August 2010, organized by Institute of Literature, Urdu, Persian and Languages, University of Peshawar. Henceforth Hakeemullah, Pushto Ghazal.
2. Yar Muhammad Maghmoom, *Da Azadai Tahreek au Pukhtu Shayeri*, 1900-1947 (Pukhtu) (Peshawar: Pukhtu Academy, 2007), p. 27. Henceforth Maghmoom, *Pukhtu Shayeri*.
3. Beverley Southgate, *History: What and Why? Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), p. 15.
4. Ibid.
5. Maghmoom, *Pukhtu Shayeri*, pp. 31-32.
6. Fleischner, Justine. “Governance and Militancy in Pakistan’s Swat Valley” at http://csis.org/files/publication/111014_Fleischner_SwatValley_0.pdf. Accessed on 2-10-2012.
7. Sultan-e-Rome. “Crises and Reconciliation in Swat”. *Pakistaniaat: A Journal of Pakistan studies* .Vol. 3. No. 1, 2011, pp. 53-79.

Swat Crisis: An Overview

The Yusafzai tribe migrated to Swat in 16 century, but they did not establish a government in Swat and lived according to their tribal traditions.⁶ Swat State came into being in 1915 when a tribal *jarga* brought Sayyid Abdul Jabbar Shah to Swat. After its merger with Pakistan in 1969, Swat, Dir and Chitral were given the status of districts, named Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) and put under the administration of North West Frontier Province (Now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Before the merger, the state had its *Dasturul Amal*—code of conduct, which had fulfilled the demand and requirement of the people. Cases were decided according to that code of conduct. After merger with Pakistan the government promulgated PATA Regulation, a complex and unwelcoming law. The delay in resolving cases through judicial process created discontent among the people and speedy justice was demanded by different segments of the society. Tahrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM) became much popular and dominated the scene.⁷ TNSM demanded that Islamic law must be implemented in the whole Malakand division, and for that purpose there was an arm disruption in 1994. The turmoil of 1990s did not change the attitude of the government to resolve the issue and delaying tactics were used to prolong the tension. The 9/11 incident in USA changed politics of the World and US invaded Afghanistan. The TNSM chief Sufi Muhammad led a crowd of about 10,000 to Afghanistan for Jihad against the US and her allies, and on his return from Afghanistan, he was arrested along with his son in law Fazlullah.⁸ Fazlullah was released from jail after seventeen month imprisonment, and after some time of his return from the jail he started a private FM radio broadcasting channel in his own village Mam Dheri.

After the Lal Masjid operation in Islamabad, Fazlullah declared Jihad against the government and started offensive measures against the Pakistani police and government assets.⁹ To counter Fazlullah, the State machinery responded and Pakistan Army launched four operations in Swat from 2007-2009. As a result of those operations, the army although partially cleared the area from Taliban but on the other hand it brought immense damages to Swat. Every sphere of life was directly affected by these crisis and hundreds of thousands of people were forced by Pakistan army to leave their homes and migrated to other parts of the country.¹⁰ The consequences of the crisis were deep rooted and influenced all spheres of life.

The Beauty of Swat in the Eyes of Poets

Swat is usually called Switzerland of the East is very famous for her beauty. Huge numbers of visitors from all over the world came here and enjoyed the beauty and hospitality of the area.

8. Ihsan Haqqani, *Swat ka Muqqadama* (Mingora: Shoaib Sons, 2009), p. 20. Henceforth Haqqani, Swat.
9. Siddique, Qandeel. “Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan”. at [http:// www.diis.dk/graphics/.../RP2010-12-Tehrik-e-Taliban_web.pdf](http://www.diis.dk/graphics/.../RP2010-12-Tehrik-e-Taliban_web.pdf). Accessed 23-09-2012. Henceforth Qandeel, “Tehrik-e-Taliban”.
10. Zahid Ali Khan, “Military Operations in FATA and PATA: Implications for Pakistan”. at http://www.issi.org.pk/publication-files/1339999992_58398784.pdf , p. 133. Accessed on 2-10-2012.
11. Naqib Ahmad Jan, recorded by Ishtiaq Ahmad in a meeting at his residence in Swat, 8 February 2013. It is pertinent to note that all unpublished poetry has been referred in this manner. Ishtiaq Ahmad recoded the poetry during his visits to the poet at their respective residences in Swat on the dates mentioned against their names. We have not written the exact villages of the poets as they had asked so.
12. Eitaab Buner, 09 February 2013. Henceforth Buner.
13. Fazal Hussain Mazloom, 11 February 2013. Henceforth Mazloom.
14. Muhammad Ayaz Khalil, 08 February 2013. Henceforth Khalil.
15. Sarwar Musakhail, 12 February 2013. Henceforth Musakhail.

As the poets keenly observe their surroundings so they cannot ignore one of the beautiful valleys on the earth. Naqib Ahmad Jan, a local poet of Swat, wrote about this valley in the following Urdu verses:

Let’s come if you want to see heaven on earth¹¹
 Let’s come if you want to see the beauty of nature
 You would see enchanting valleys
 As if god ferries have come down on earth.

The poets compare her beauty to rest of the cities, some time they gave preference to its flowers while some time they favour her spring and some time they consider the Swat River and its speciality. Following verses are the best examples of comparison.

Eitab Bunairy praises the beauty of Swat in the following way:

From where should I start the description of its beauty?¹²
 There is awesome beauty in Swat
 There is enchanting beauty everywhere
 River Swat presents spectacular sight of breath taking beauty

Why one may wait for the onset of spring¹³
 O Mazlum! There is spring in Swat all the time.

When they started praising the beauty of the cities of West¹⁴
 I started praising the beauty of the springs of Swat.

In normal situation almost all the poets focus on romantic poetry and at times social problems. After the crisis they found a new field for their writing because it left deep scars on their mind. In their opinion there are many factors of this crisis including her beauty as Sarwar Musakhail narrates it:

Oh! My beautiful Swat, a land of fascinating hues and colors¹⁵
 You have become bereft of colors due to vicissitudes of time
 The foe has have bad intentions for you
 It seems your extreme beauty has become your foe.



NOTES
16. Sardar Alam Sater, 12 February 2013. Henceforth Sater.
17. Darwaish Durrani, 8 February 2013. Henceforth Durrani.
18. Muhammad Gul Mansoor, *Os Bangri Chala Wakhlam* (Pukhtu) (Takhtbai: 2010), p. 81. Henceforth Mansoor, *Bangri*.
19. Muhammad Raziq Wisal, 12 February 2013. Henceforth Wisal.
20. Sater.
21. Salem Miankhail, 9 February 2013. Henceforth Miankhail.
22. Mansoor, *Bangri*, p. 31.
23. Ibid., 64
24. Muhammad Ilyas Saqib, *Da Namar pa Seera* (Pukhtu) (Mingora: Jan Kitab Kor, 2012), p. 61. Henceforth Saqib, *Namar pa Seera*.
25. Ibid,83.

The Events of Crisis as Depicted in Local Poetry

The poetry written during the crisis has discussed many events which clearly reflect how the poets understood the phenomena. Following is a sketch of the sufferings of the people as observed by different poets.

My beautiful land has suffered tremendously.¹⁶
My heart bleeds on the destruction of my fascinating land
My land is going through the horrific period of its history
Old and young mourn alike on this destruction

Regarding the law and order situation the narration of poets are:

The merchants of people send every day¹⁷
The cut off head of an innocent at-least as gift

She prayed! May you come back safe today¹⁸
I do not demand for nose ring and bangles any more

The role of Pakistan Army has been widely criticized by the people of Swat. There are reports that instead of hunting the militants they have mostly tortured the general public. One of the poets lamented in the following way:

Swat resembles Karbala where Hussainites are dying¹⁹
Yazid’s troops have pitched themselves on the mountains.

Migration and Local Poetry

The military ordered the people to leave their homes and migrate to safe places during the operation. There was no proper and organized means arranged by the authorities. Orders were issued to vacate villages in very less time. Neither there was any facility for sick, old and children nor any mean of transportation. The people including sick, old, children and women traveled for many kilometers by foot. This gloomy sight has been depicted in the following manner:

My feet are swollen due to blisters²⁰
I don’t have any strength to continue walking.
O! My beloved father hold me in your arms
My feeble body does not have any strength.

The soft beautiful feet of the women have been despoiled²¹
who are running to and fro for protection of their honour.

I am homeless and have lost every thing²²
O God! Bring peace in Swat my beloved is homeless
Let me narrate the woeful tale of my country
The rich and poor both are homeless.

The Stature of Leadership in Local Poetry

The poets have blamed their leaders and are of the opinion that the policies and vested interest of their leaders are responsible for the miseries of the people. General Musharaf, MMA government in NWFP and all others are criticized for being incompetent and filthy. The poets consider that none of them has the courage to speak the truth. Everyone of them is working for vested interests and depicted Pukhtuns as terrorists.

They used to call us terrorists²³
Our leader has always showed such cunningness
Alas! Our leadership is inept.

They sell us to other for their vested interest²⁴
But when they are among us they talk about self-respect.

The poets have also blamed the people at helm of affairs for being deceptive. They have named them on the pay roll of ‘others’. Though this ‘others’ is not mentioned but the military leadership and Pukhtun nationalists are criticized for receiving money and working for the outsiders.

Whosoever becomes our leader²⁵
He is on the payroll of ‘others’.

NOTES

26. Ibid, 89.
 27. Muhammad Hashim Jan Sirhindi, *Shaledaley Grewan* (Pukhtu) (Mingora: Jan Kitab Kor, 2010), p. 98. Henceforth Sirhindi, *Shaledaley Grewan*.
 28. Muhammad Ilyas Saqib, 12 February 2013. Henceforth Saqib.
 29. Ibid.

30. Rohul Amin Amin, 9 February 2013. Henceforth Amin.
 31. Mirajuddin Sangeen, 12 February 2013. Henceforth Sangeen.
 32. Masud Shah Saud, 9 February 2013. Henceforth Saud.
 33. Sulaiman Fida, 10 February 2013. Henceforth Fida.
 34. Shaad Buner, 11 February 2013. Henceforth Buner.



The poets, representing the collective wisdom of the community blame the political leadership for not resolving the issues confronting the masses. They have also have blamed their plight from the area much before the situation was worsened. Saqib and Sirhindi have referred to this situation in the following verses:

There is no one among the Pukhtuns leaders who could say²⁶
 I will stand by you through thick and thin.

Neither he resolves the differences nor maintains the peace²⁷
 I am more than leader to you although I am an evil
 I am witnessing the worst sort of atrocities
 Yet I close my eyes from all this, then how I am leader.

Apprehensions of the People

The poets consider the present wave of militancy a part of the game which has been playing in the region for the last few decades. They categorically state that Pukhtuns are not terrorists rather victim of the aforementioned game. Saqib has reflected this feeling in the following verse:

Neither we do fight nor are terrorist, we are peace loving²⁸
 We are pukhtuns far we are blamed as terrorist.

We can also find the apprehension of the people in the poetry. They consider the present situation a war against the Pukhtuns.

Every day,²⁹
 Only pukhtuns are dying
 Men and women
 They are dying in the name of peace
 The people who understood
 They knew why they are dying
 O Saqib!
 No one else is dying
 Every day
 Only pukhtuns are dying.

I asked oppressor why you are killing me³⁰
 He told me that I am the resident of Pukhtunkhwa

Poets not only narrate the events but are worried about the future of their nation. In the same way Mirajuddin Sangeen of Swat is much worried about the future of his people. He has the opinion that in the current continuous oppression is a systematic plan to push the people towards inferiority complex.

There are slaughtered every where³¹
 How the situation will get better
 The people could not utter anything due to fear
 They are sliding towards inferiority complex.
 Furthermore they are apprehensive for their future and suggest that speaking the truth results in the assassination of the speaker.

When you utter anything for your right³²
 You will find yourself an example for other.

The poetry of the crisis has also a reflection of the threats posed to the honour of the females. Sulaiman Fida has nicely depicted the picture in the following couplet:

O maidens keep intact your modesty³³
 The values of the times have now been changed
 Now the honour, property and existence of course is no more safe
 Here the values of peace and modesty are of another kind.

They have also discussed the behaviour of the armed forces with the general public. There are reports that security personal have looted their homes during the operation. Shad Buner has described it in the following verses:

When I came to know my condition had deteriorated³⁴
 When I came to know my life had become a jock
 O Shaad! The people who were our guards
 They had looted our homes.



NOTES
35. Sangeen.
36. Muhammad Hayat Hayat, 12 February 2013. Henceforth Hayat.
37. Amin.
38. Fida.
39. Saqib, Namar pa Seera, p. 139.

40. Mansoor, Bangri, p. 89.
41. Wali Rahman Wali, 9 February 2013. Henceforth Wali.
42. Fida.
43. Ibid.
44. Ismail Darman, 8 February 2013. Henceforth Daman.
45. Ibid.

These poets have referred to the people feelings about the role of the security agencies. One of the common beliefs of the masses is that this whole mess has been created by the state agencies. The poets have narrated categorically:

Whom could we ask for justice and safety?³⁵
They are the supporters of oppressors.

They come as powerful people³⁶
And oppress me in my home.

Traditionally *Lakhar* (also *Lashkar*) were formed for the implementation of *jargah* (also jirga, jirgah, jarga)—Pukhtuns council of elders, protect the tribe in crisis and at times offensive on the opposing tribe. The swat crisis changed the formation of tribal *lakhkar* to a different form. The state institutions involved in *lakhkar* formation and armed the masses for the protection of their areas as well as fighting against the militants. Some of the Pukhtun intelligentsia objected to the officially patronized *lakhkar* on the plea that state agencies will lose justification of its existence on one hand and will add to polarization on the other hand. The people of Swat also did not like it and considered it a conspiracy against the local people. The poets gave their advice to the high ups that this is not a good practice. Peace can only be retained by peaceful means and violence begets violence as Rooh ul Amin Amin and Sulaiman Fida have depicted in the following manner:

Peace will come through peaceful means³⁷
But not by putting the barrels over Pukhtuns shoulders

O Leader of pukhtuns! Do understand this³⁸
That peace will come without gun and *Lakhkar*

War in Local Poetry

The poets being more sensitive discuss all aspects of society. There is an elegant verse of Saqib:

If someone ask me about the war³⁹
I am not at all supporter of the war except in love

We are peace loving people⁴⁰
We want peace we are not prone to fighting.

After the operation the behavior of the security forces towards the local people was humiliating. Dozens of check posts were established by the security forces The treatment of the people by the security forces was like a conquering army. The general public was compelled to perform night watch duties. The poets narrate the state of affairs in their own style but also express their fear.

I want to express my feeling⁴¹
But could not due to prevailing fear
Search me at every step, asking, where have you come from
It is very difficult to come out from home now.
Apart from the fear the poets also condemn the forces for not performing their duties and compelling the people to protect them. Fida has not only nicely referred to the situation but also question the efficiency of the army.

They call me fool⁴²
I am fool in their sight
Look how they are getting protection from me
How they would go to battle field.

I am interrogated at every footstep⁴³
I am being treated as a stranger at my home
I am asked to prove my identity
O God! No one should be insulted in such a way.

The depiction of Mullah

Pukhtuns are emotionally attached to Islam. The mullah and religious class has always been respected but the crisis has leveled down the popularity graph of mullahs and now the people think about them in such a manner:

The fairy tales of Paradise and Hell are no more believed⁴⁴
It has become very difficult to deal with *mullah*.

O un-practicing *mullah*! do not give us sermon⁴⁵
Your greed has distorted your faith.



NOTES
46. Saqib, *Namar pa Seera*, p. 41.
47. Mansoor, *Bangri*, p. 79.
48. Saqib, *Namar pa Seera*, p. 31.
49. Ibid, p. 61

50. Ibid.
51. Darman.
52. Darman.

I shall not pardon those *mullahs*⁴⁶
Who have misguided my nation

We wondered one another when saw each other.⁴⁷
In this time of confusion we stopped our prostrations
All Muslims would become unite on one platform
If our *Mullahs* abandoned the apostatizing *fatwa* (religious decrees)

Pray and Advice by the Poets

The poets, in their poetry, pray for peace and also advice the people to enlighten themselves through education.

O Allah! Please accept my pray for peace⁴⁸
Let no one be killed in any bomb blast

O Allah! Bring instability to those people⁴⁹
Who are instigating my poor nation for war

Take the pen and wipe out the blame of terrorism from you⁵⁰
O Pukhtun! You are being suspected as long as the gun is in your hand.

The Religious and Social Celebration in Crisis

The poet presents the sorrow state of affairs and question how his nation can celebrate different religious and social festivals. One of the poets reflects the people feelings in the following way:

The heart of every person is full of grief and sorrow.⁵¹
O happy day of Eid! We are not in position to enjoy you
How we can welcome you in the series of miseries
We are being killed without any justification

The New Year is welcomed in the following modus⁵²
Welcome! New Year
Bring progress, knowledge and peace
Come so that we could envy each other

O New Year! Come with zeal and enthusiasm
Come with beautiful messages
Come like spring with beautiful flowers
Bring happiness to the dejected hearts
Bring freedom of our enslaved lives
Bring new ideas and perceptions in our life
Bring good sentiments to our life
O New Year! Bring the tide of progress
Bring a lot of happiness for us, despaired people.

Conclusion

The Swat crisis is one of the darkest episodes of history for the people of Swat. They are peace loving people and emotionally attached to Islam. They have been exploited a few times in the name of religion. The religious class has mobilized them many times in the past and those aware of the fact used clergy for the vested interests. We have witnessed in the uprising of 1897 and promulgation of Tahrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM). In the former case, Sartor Faqir was leading while in the later Sufi Muhammad was the man who led the masses. Similarly in Swat crisis Fazalullah and his associates were the key persons who misused Islam for their vested interests and served the cause of the hidden agenda operating in the region since long.

For the crisis of Swat not only religious circle was responsible but illiteracy of Pukhtuns, un-employment and vested interests of different States, role of leaders and security agencies have also contributed a lot. Besides, the crisis also provided some food for thought and people started thinking about their future. The poets and other literary persons wrote about the prevailing situation in their society, and advised fellow Pukhtuns to enlighten them with modern education as most of the evils emerge in dark. The crisis has deeply influenced the people of almost every walk of life and the psychological, political, economical and social implications are visible on society.

The way out of the present crisis is not simple as many Pakistani and outside state actors are involved but the mess may be brought considerably in control if every individual is educated enough to differentiate between the truth and myths. We like to sum up with the following verse:

Take the pen and wipe out the blame of terrorism from you
O Pukhtun! You are being suspected as long as the gun is in your hand.

In this post, RegNet and CIGJ Fellow Lia Kent introduces the research project she is currently working on and its theoretical framework. A second post, to be published on the 1st of July, will discuss the themes emerging from Lia's preliminary fieldwork. Both posts are based on a seminar that Lia gave at RegNet on 24 May 2016.[i]



DR LIA KENT, CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE & JUSTICE, REGNET, ANU

AFTER CONFLICT: MEMORY FRICTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE AND ACEH



Timorese student protest

My project lies at an intersection between scholarship on peace-building and memory studies. I'm hoping that bringing these disciplines into dialogue will allow a nuanced appreciation of the long-term, conflictual dynamics of building peace after conflict in Timor-Leste and Aceh. Timor-Leste is a country that I know very well, while Aceh is a new context for me, so my observations about it are far more speculative at this point.

Memory practices, unsettling transitional justice and peacebuilding assumptions

In [previous work](#), I examined the transitional justice process in Timor-Leste: the legal and quasi-legal mechanisms that were established during the period of [UNTAET](#) (2000-2002) to address crimes committed during the Indonesian occupation. My particular focus was on how ordinary East Timorese perceived and experienced the truth commission and trials. What became clear to me in the course of this research was that practices of remembering the past, and struggles over its meaning, were continuing despite the conclusion of the transitional justice process, and often outside formal institutional contexts. These practices engage a wide range of actors, both political elites and ordinary people.

The ongoing nature of these practices and debates complicates some of the assumptions inherent within peacebuilding and transitional justice scholarship and practice. Preoccupation with the operation of a particular set of institutions within a narrow temporal framework misses a great deal of rich activity and debate. In the context of Timor at least, this activity seems to be central to the ways in which the terms of the peace were, and are, being negotiated.

The continuing debate also suggests that sites and practices of memory have multiple meanings, and that these meanings are constantly being negotiated. This brings into question the relationship between memory and peace that is often assumed in the literature on transitional justice and peacebuilding. There tends to be an assumption that memorialisation and commemoration initiatives provide a form of recognition and symbolic reparation to victims that contributes to their healing.

The concept of collective memory is used to capture the fact that, while memory is a function of individual cognition, it is also socially produced, organised and mediated. Individual memories always operate in broader social and political frameworks, and it is within society that people ‘recall, recognise and localise’ their memories.[iii] The concept of collective memory also recognises that memories are always selectively constructed and past events interpreted in the light of present-day preoccupations and interests.[iv]

Memory practices, unsettling transitional justice and peacebuilding assumptions *contd*

It is also argued that by fostering shared remembrance of common experiences of loss and grief, these initiatives will strengthen bonds between groups and individuals, thereby contributing to social cohesion. As Nico Wouters puts it, memory initiatives are seen as part of a narrative of learning ‘lessons’ from the past, a narrative that assumes, problematically, a linear, direct, and easy accessibility to the past.[ii]

To develop a more nuanced understanding of transitional justice and peacebuilding, I turned to the memory studies literature. I have found this lens very useful for situating memory projects and practices in a broader temporal framework. It also helps to develop an appreciation of the ways in which, just as remembering can contribute to healing and social cohesion, it can also be the basis of on-going power struggles because memory is linked to questions of power, legitimacy and recognition.

Key terms and concepts

Here it is probably helpful to outline a number of terms and concepts that I am working with in this project. First and foremost, when I speak of ‘memory’, I am speaking not of individual memory but of what is commonly termed social memory or collective memory.

Collective memory

The concept of collective memory is used to capture the fact that, while memory is a function of individual cognition, it is also socially produced, organised and mediated. Individual memories always operate in broader social and political frameworks, and it is within society that people ‘recall, recognise and localise’ their memories.[iii] The concept of collective memory also recognises that memories are always selectively constructed and past events interpreted in the light of present-day preoccupations and interests.[iv]

I prefer to use the term ‘collective remembrance’ rather than collective memory because this accentuates the importance of agency, activity and creativity, and sees memory as a dynamic socio-cultural process.[v]

My project builds on a growing number of studies that explore the politics of memory: the ways in which official narratives are challenged or reshaped by those who perceive their version of the past to be marginalised. Many of these studies are also attentive to the ways in which globalised discourses – such as human rights – that foreground the experiences of the ‘suffering victim’ increasingly shape expressions of memory.

Politics of memory

Much of the work of collective memory scholars focuses on how memory serves as a medium for the creation of political communities, in particular national communities. It has long been observed, for instance, that national elites use performances of public remembrance to cultivate a shared understanding of the past, and thereby reinforce a sense of national identity and through this, their own legitimacy.[vi] These dynamics are magnified in post-conflict societies when there is an acute need to give meaning to past experiences of grief and loss, and to imagine a collective future. And one of the reasons, of course, that remembrance is such an effective tool for building political community is that it has a powerful emotional, or affective, dimension. Yet the state does not have a monopoly on the production of collective memory. My project builds on a growing number of studies that explore the politics of memory: the ways in which official narratives are challenged or reshaped by those who perceive their version of the past to be marginalised. Many of these studies are also attentive to the ways in which globalised discourses – such as human rights – that foreground the experiences of the ‘suffering victim’ increasingly shape expressions of memory. My project is particularly interested in the ways in which ‘official’ memories intersect with multiple, and at times, conflicting ‘unofficial’ memories. A focus on this intersection can reveal much about emerging forms of political and social identity and can also, in turn, reveal something about how peace is imagined and negotiated in the aftermath of conflict. A caveat here is that the distinction between official and unofficial is not always clear cut: some memories start out as unofficial and become official. I am still debating whether this is a useful distinction.

Friction

The final concept that I want to mention is that of friction. Anna Tsing uses the concept in her work on global connections to characterise the diverse and unequal global/local encounters between actors, ideas and practices that produce new power dynamics. She employs the notion of friction to capture the ways in which global ideas are both charged and changed when they engage with local contexts. The concept has been taken up by other scholars, including Bjorkdahl and Hoglund who, in their work on peacebuilding, highlight the ways in which frictional encounters can lead to the elevation of some discourse and actors and the disempowerment of others.[vii] The concept of friction is a helpful lens through which to observe the dynamics that unfold when different discourses, ideas and practices encounter each other in the public sphere in the context of remembrance.

Both have a recent history of conflict, with struggles for independence from Indonesia that began at roughly the same time. Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975, while the conflict between Aceh and the Republic of Indonesia began 1976/7. In both cases, there were active armed resistance movements. In Timor, the armed resistance was led by FALINTIL and in Aceh, it was led by GAM.

A significant factor in the peace agreement was the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, which killed approximately one hundred and sixty five thousand people and devastated much of the capital, Banda Aceh. Peace talks resumed soon after the disaster and, as Ed Aspinall notes, leaders on both sides said they were motivated to achieve peace in order to facilitate rebuilding.[viii]

The case studies

Before I discuss what is emerging from my observations of Timor-Leste and Aceh, let me first talk briefly about why I've chosen these two case studies, and my methodology. As you can see, there's a nice synergy about looking at these two case studies, which lie at the opposite ends of the Indonesian archipelago.

Similarities and differences

I'm adopting an exploratory approach to the study, using the cases of Timor and Aceh to generate rich, contextualised findings, rather than doing a structured, focused comparison. Nonetheless, these cases share a number of similarities as well as presenting interesting contrasts. Both have a recent history of conflict, with struggles for independence from Indonesia that began at roughly the same time. Indonesia invaded East Timor in 1975, while the conflict between Aceh and the Republic of Indonesia began 1976/7. In both cases, there were active armed resistance movements. In Timor, the armed resistance was led by FALINTIL and in Aceh, it was led by GAM. In both cases, the conflict led to a significant loss of life, although the death toll was much higher in Timor. In both, significant violence was committed not only by the Indonesian military, but also by the resistance movement.

A key difference is the ways in which these conflicts ended, and their outcomes. In Timor-Leste a UN-sponsored referendum on self-determination in 1999 led to an overwhelming vote for separation from Indonesia. Timor-Leste became an independent nation in 2002, following a period of UN transitional administration. In Aceh, a peace deal was eventually negotiated in Helsinki in 2005, after a number of other stalled attempts. The agreement granted an expanded form of autonomy to the province of Aceh within the state of Indonesia. It allowed for the official recognition of Acehnese political parties and was predicated on a dramatic reduction in Indonesia's military presence in the province. A significant factor in the peace agreement was the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, which killed approximately one hundred and sixty five thousand people and devastated much of the capital, Banda Aceh. Peace talks resumed soon after the disaster and, as Ed Aspinall notes, leaders on both sides said they were motivated to achieve peace in order to facilitate rebuilding.[viii]

The Tsunami also led to increased international interest in Aceh, as a massive reconstruction effort was mounted. This helped cement international and domestic support for the peace process.



In both Timor-Leste and Aceh, women were active participants in the conflict. In Timor-Leste, some women took up arms as part of the FALINTIL resistance, but they were more commonly a part of the civilian resistance or clandestine movement, where they took on roles as logisticians, cooks, and couriers. More so than in Timor, Acehnese women took up arms against the Indonesian military and joined GAM. This prompts questions about how women's roles are being recognised in official and unofficial memories, and the consequences of this for women's status in present day society.

The case studies *contd...*

Another point of difference is the degree to which transitional justice mechanisms have been implemented following the formal end of hostilities. In Timor-Leste, the UN established a number of transitional justice mechanisms – including a tribunal and a truth commission – to respond to the crimes committed during the Indonesian occupation. While the trials were widely regarded as flawed – particularly as no members of the Indonesian military were brought to trial – the truth commission has produced a final report that highlights civilian experiences of violence. This report has contributed to producing collective memories of the conflict in Timor-Leste, although as I'll discuss, its effect has been limited.

In relation to Aceh, while a number of transitional justice mechanisms, including a human rights court, a truth commission, and compensation measures were included in the peace agreement, other than the compensation measures, these have not yet been implemented. Currently, steps are in train for the establishment of a province-led TRC, which is being pursued in the absence of agreement on a national level TRC. So these distinctions lead to interesting questions about the extent to which the presence or absence of transitional justice mechanisms affects the shaping of collective memories. For instance, are memories of conflict expressed more readily in human rights terms in Timor-Leste than in Aceh?

There are other interesting contrasts between the two contexts – one of these relates to gender. In both Timor-Leste and Aceh, women were active participants in the conflict. In Timor-Leste, some women took up arms as part of the FALINTIL resistance, but they were more commonly a part of the civilian resistance or clandestine movement, where they took on roles as logisticians, cooks, and couriers. More so than in Timor, Acehnese women took up arms against the Indonesian military and joined GAM. This prompts questions about how women's roles are being recognised in official and unofficial memories, and the consequences of this for women's status in present day society.

Religion provides another contrast. The majority of Acehnese strongly identify themselves as Islamic, while the majority of Timorese are Catholic. In both societies, there are also strong socio-cultural beliefs, systems and practices that coexist with and to some extent infuse formal religious practice. How do these dynamics affect the ways in which memory is constructed?

Religion provides another contrast. The majority of Acehnese strongly identify themselves as Islamic, while the majority of Timorese are Catholic. In both societies, there are also strong socio-cultural beliefs, systems and practices that coexist with and to some extent infuse formal religious practice. How do these dynamics affect the ways in which memory is constructed?

Methodology

I am using a combination of ethnographic and interviewing techniques to conduct fieldwork in both Timor-Leste and Aceh. This fieldwork consists of:

- In-depth, semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of community members, including men and women who lived through the conflict. I am also interested in talking to members of the younger generation who may not have direct memories of the conflict, in order to understand how memories are transmitted to, and potentially shaped, by young Timorese and Acehnese;
- Interviews with selected 'elite' actors including government and non-government representatives in the capital cities and leading representatives of groups closely involved in the construction of collective memory;
- Participant observation of official and unofficial memory practices, in particular, commemorative events, and visits to memorials.

Notes

[i] Lia's research is funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Research Award DE150100857.

[ii] Wouters, N. *Transitional Justice and Memory Development in Europe*, Mortsels, Intersentia, p 6-10.

[iii] Halbwachs, M. (trans. and ed. L.A. Coser). 1992. *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p 38.

[iv] Olick, J., V. Vinitzky-Seroussi and D. Levy 2011. Introduction. In *The Collective Memory Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3–62, p 18.

[v] Wouters above n ii

[vi] Ibbeck, R (2009). *Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialisation in Rwanda*. PhD thesis, the University of Bristol, 330

[vii] Bjorkdahl, A. and K. Hoglund 2013. *Precarious Peacebuilding: Friction in Global-Local Encounters*. *Peacebuilding* 1(3):289–99.

[viii] Aspinall, Edward. 2013. Aceh: 'Democratization and the Politics of Co-option', in Aspinall, Edward, Jeffery, Robin, and Regan, Anthony, *Diminishing Conflicts in the Asia Pacific*, London and New York, Routledge, p 51-68.

Gulzar Ali, M.Phil Scholar, Department of History, University of Peshawar. His research topic - *"The Mujahidin at Chamarkand: 1915-1947"*. Ali's area of research is the resistance movement based on religion against the British Colonial Government in North Western region of India. This includes History of the British Raj in the NW Frontier region, Colonial Resistance with focus on Mujahidin Movement and its relevance to Tribal support, History of Afghanistan, Provincial Politics under the British Raj, Socio-cultural History of Pakistan's NW region, and Religious transformation in the NW region of Pakistan. Ali is presently working with Centre of Excellence for Rural Development (CERD) since 2009 at different locations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Gulzar Ali

MPhil Scholar, Department of History, University of Peshawar who has worked in Bannu with Centre of Excellence for Rural Development (CERD) providing relief assistance to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of FATA (Federally Administered Tribal Areas semi-autonomous tribal region in north-western Pakistan, bordering Pakistan's provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, speaks exclusively to Mark Ulyseas.



IDP from North Waziristan receiving food assistance at Bannu. Photograph courtesy Gulzar Ali.

Why did you work for two years in Bannu?

I am working with an organization since 2010, providing relief assistance to IDPs and victims of natural disasters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. I was transferred to Bannu, when the military launched operations against militants in North Waziristan. This is when people began migrating to Bannu to avoid the conflict.

Could you give us a brief background as to why IDPs come to Bannu?

North Waziristan Agency, located at the North Western border of Pakistan and an important area in FATA region is administered through FCR by the Government of Pakistan. It was due to the operation initiated in 2009 against the militants in Malakand Division that forced the militants to shift their centre of activities.

It is a known fact that militant groups regularly shift their centres of operations.

The same technique was adopted by the militants in Malakand when they kept moving to different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and also in FATA, and finally to North Waziristan Agency. The government launched military operations against the militants on 15th June 2014 in North Waziristan Agency. The people were asked to immediately vacate the area. They had no time to collect all their necessary belongings. And as a result of this sudden displacement, the people began moving to the first available safe haven to set up their temporary homes.

Due to the proximity of the affected areas to the Bannu District, it resulted in the influx of IDPs. Almost 80% of the IDPs sought refuge in Bannu to avoid the high summer temperatures. Nearly a million migrated to Bannu in a matter of days.

The government is still providing PKR. 12000/ to each household for their house rent and other utility bills. The government is providing security to the relief activities as well as to the organization working for the relief of IDPs. The NGOs and INGOs need the authorization certificate to carry out their activities in the field.

The lives of the IDPs are badly affected by the migration. Those IDPs who were associated with agriculture and livestock had left their standing crops and livestock in the affected areas and the businesses being run were subsequently destroyed, completely. To provide the IDPs with assistance is not a substitute for their losses. But the only solution is the rehabilitation of these people in the places of their origin without delay.

What is the social and economic impact on the area?

Before the migration of the IDPs to Bannu, the population of the District was 0.7 to 0.8 million. After the influx of IDPs the population doubled. The market got overcrowded while the streets and other public places turned into examples of unhygienic activities because of the huge influx of the people. The prices of commodities and property multiplied and small townships developed (still being developed). Tent villages were built in almost all nearby surrounding villages. Privacy of the local population was also disturbed. Clashes between the locals and IDPs arose because of cultural differences.

Before mass migration the people of North Waziristan lived in Joint/extended families in their own houses for which they didn't need to pay rent and other utilities bills.

But in Bannu they didn't find spacious houses to accommodate the extended families nor houses with reasonable rent. The business community found it as 'blessing in disguise' as they gained more importance in the eyes of their customers - the newly displaced migrants - helping to boost their business and tormenting the common people. On the other hand the local population got more job opportunities in national and international NGOs as it became the hub of activities for these organizations and United Nation Agencies in the southern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

What is the Government doing to assist the IDPs?

The government at first established centres through Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA) at different places where registration was done on household basis. Every type of relief assistance was provided, and is being provided to them on the basis of that registration. In first few months Pakistan Army distributed food and non-food items among the IDPs. The government is still providing PKR. 12000/ to each household for their house rent and other utility bills. The government is providing security to the relief activities as well as to the organization working for the relief of IDPs. The NGOs and INGOs need the authorization certificate to carry out their activities in the field.

What are security concerns, if any?

The security concerns can better be explained by person relating to law enforcement agencies. However, the overall crime rate has been increased as the law enforcement agencies are mostly engaged to provide security to the relief activities and they are unable to control the huge population because of the limited strength of manpower and resources.

What are your impressions after your two-year stint working with IDPs?

The lives of the IDPs are badly affected by the migration. Those IDPs who were associated with agriculture and livestock had left their standing crops and livestock in the affected areas and the businesses being run were subsequently destroyed, completely. To provide the IDPs with assistance is not a substitute for their losses. The only solution is the rehabilitation of these people in the places of their origin without delay.

What is your message to the world?

Maintaining peace and exhibiting universal tolerance irrespective of the religious rationale can make the word beautiful for the humanity.



"One clear message from last Thursday's vote is that millions of people feel shut out of a political and economic system that has let them down and scarred our country with grotesque levels of inequality."

Jeremy Corbyn, message to supporters, 26 June, 2016.



DAVID MORGAN

Against The One Percent - The Real Meaning of The UK's Referendum Vote



<https://pixabay.com/en/big-ben-london-parliament-tower-810303/>

While it is certainly undeniable that anxieties about mass migration featured as a major factor in the campaign, it was not the only reason that nearly 17.5 million people in Britain voted to leave the European Union on 23rd June 2016. The surprise outcome has also been described as the greatest popular uprising since the peasants' revolt of 1381. The ruling establishment which had pulled out all the stops to ensure a positive outcome in favour of the EU was dealt a body blow by the shock victory for the Vote Leave campaign led by former London mayor Boris Johnson. The final opinion polls on the eve of the voting had been suggesting that the Remain in the EU campaign was edging ahead. The pollsters had got it seriously wrong once again.

Many towns and cities around Britain have been transformed over the past few years by the presence of a large influx of East Europeans looking for a better life overseas since citizens of these new EU member states were granted "free movement" under Europe's open door policy. As a result, pressures on housing, competition for jobs and extra pressure on services such as hospitals and public transport, have stoked tensions and fuelled anxieties. A popular backlash is clearly reflected in the large vote to Leave the European Union that heralded a political earthquake in the early hours of 24th June when the result of the Referendum was announced, with just short of 52 percent opting to Leave against 48 percent wanting to Remain. Nearly 17.5 million voted to Leave as against just over 16 million to Remain. It was a relatively close but a significant margin of well over a million votes.

Patterns of voting in terms of age groups suggest it was generally the case that more young people voted to stay in; first time voters, students, in fact anyone under 30, will not have any personal experience of what life was like before the impact of globalisation and mass migration took hold and reshaped British culture and society in many communities. By contrast the older generations have a lingering nostalgia for a past where they believe that life was simpler, easier and better. This is certainly a misperception of how things really were but it was still a strong factor in determining how people voted in the Referendum which was dominated by arguments about losing control and the country's place in a harsher globalised world.

“Europe has had a great and glorious civilisation, (but) although Europe can claim Goethe and Leonardo, Voltaire and Picasso, there have been evil features in European history, too – Hitler and Mussolini and today the attitude of some Europeans to the Congo problem, the attitude of at least one European government to the United Nations. You cannot say what this Europe will be: it has its two faces and we do not know, as yet, which is the one that will be dominant.”

“But here is another question we have to ask; what exactly is involved in the concept of political union? We hear a lot about it; we are told that the Economic Community is not just a customs union, that all who framed it saw it as a stepping towards political integration. We ought to be told what is meant by that, for if this be true our entry into the Common Market carries with it some very serious political obligations.”

Many people were deeply shocked by the outcome of the Referendum and its implications for the future of Britain are going to be discussed for a very long time. Many people initially simply refused to accept the outcome, which calls into question the whole basis of democracy. A post-Referendum petition calling on the UK government to hold a second referendum had apparently attracted in excess of three million signatures, but this was soon to be embroiled in accusations of fraud and is currently under an official investigation.

The political earthquake shook all the main political parties. The new Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the opposition, was accused of showing insufficient enthusiasm for the EU during the course of the campaigning and has been blamed for failing to persuade a sufficiently large number of Labour voters into supporting the EU. Several members of Labour’s shadow cabinet, who are long-term political opponents of Corbyn’s leadership, have used the occasion to stage a mass resignation, provoking a political crisis within the party.

Their accusations were highly politically motivated and on close inspection they prove to be without much substance. Corbyn was in reality out campaigning every day and an analysis of party voting patterns suggests that nearly two thirds of Labour voters backed Remain, which is almost exactly the same proportion as the SNP voters who backed the same horse. Tory voters, by contrast, in far greater numbers swung the other way for leaving the EU.

Traditionally, the Labour Party has been strongly opposed to the EU, with the left of the party in particular regarding the institution as little more than a “bosses’ club”. These sentiments can be traced back decades.

One middle-of-the-road leader of the party, Hugu Gaitskill, was strongly against Britain joining the Common Market, the forerunner of the EU, in the first place. In a speech to the party conference in October 1962, Gaitskill spoke of a Europe with “two faces”,

“Europe has had a great and glorious civilisation, (but) although Europe can claim Goethe and Leonardo, Voltaire and Picasso, there have been evil features in European history, too – Hitler and Mussolini and today the attitude of some Europeans to the Congo problem, the attitude of at least one European government to the United Nations. You cannot say what this Europe will be: it has its two faces and we do not know, as yet, which is the one that will be dominant.”

Gaitskill went on to express familiar fears that the ultimate objective of the European project was one of “political union” using almost exactly the same language as expressed by today’s so-called “Brexiteers”,

“But here is another question we have to ask; what exactly is involved in the concept of political union? We hear a lot about it; we are told that the Economic Community is not just a customs union, that all who framed it saw it as a stepping towards political integration. We ought to be told what is meant by that, for if this be true our entry into the Common Market carries with it some very serious political obligations.”

Likewise, the modern ruling Tory Party of Prime Minister David Cameron has been riven with conflicts over the EU at least since the time of Margaret Thatcher, who found that it would become her nemesis. After her downfall, her successor John Major discovered that he was at constant odds with a large faction of his MPs known collectively as “Euro sceptics”, but who Major, in an unguarded comment, defined famously as “the bastards”.

In more recent years the Tory Party has come under a serious electoral challenge from a rival party, UKIP (the United Kingdom Independence Party) led by Nigel Farage, which, while only gaining one MP in the 2015 general election, won 4 million votes and has a large number of MEPs –ironically given its anti-European position – as well as a rising number of local councillors. UKIP was founded initially as a single issue party with the aim of getting Britain out of the EU. The party was established by former Conservatives disenchanted with the perceived pro-EU stance of the Tory leadership following the demise of Thatcher. Under Farage, UKIP has made deeper inroads into both Labour and Tory electoral heartlands and has won mass support for its nationalistic populist politics which is seen by many observers as bordering on racist, if not outright racist.

However, rather than being a far right party of the neo-fascistic type as is found in places such as France and Italy, UKIP is actually a splinter group from the Tory Party and, although it shares many of the unsavoury political attitudes towards immigration with openly fascist parties like the BNP in Britain, UKIP has been adept at positioning itself within mainstream politics; by which I mean, it is able to gain frequent media coverage to air its abrasive views and takes part in normal politics; in contrast, the BNP operates in semi-clandestine fringe politics and has diminishing influence. In this respect, UKIP poses a much greater danger as a resurgent party of the right and has been able to dominate the political agenda over the EU and by so doing it has engineered a dramatic shift to the right in British politics.

The people who opted to leave have done so for many different reasons, by no means all to do with fears about mass migration as it commonly assumed. The vote was a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference in British politics. Because only two options were on offer in the Referendum, a yes or a no, this meant that each person's individual vote had more value than in a general election where more than half a dozen options would usually be on offer because of the many parties vying to win their vote. The referendum put power to decide the issue directly into the hands of the voters rather than the delegation of decisions that occurs when electing a government in a general election.

UKIP's anti-mass migration arguments have fuelled prejudices but resonated with a wide section of voters and this found expression in the Referendum outcome. It is difficult to assess exactly what proportion of the 17.5 million who cast votes for Leave on 23rd June would identify themselves with UKIP explicitly. Given that the party gained those 4 million votes in 2015 and that its fortunes have been on the rise ever since then, it is possibly safe to estimate that there are currently about 6 million pro-UKIP voters among the total "Brexiters" (i.e. those who want a British exit from the EU).

A large proportion of the Leave vote, it should be understood, is made up of people who have never voted before, as well as voters who traditionally vote Labour or Tory, with a larger number from the latter party.

The people who opted to leave have done so for many different reasons, by no means all to do with fears about mass migration as it commonly assumed. The vote was a once in a lifetime opportunity to make a difference in British politics. Because only two options were on offer in the Referendum, a yes or a no, this meant that each person's individual vote had more value than in a general election where more than half a dozen options would usually be on offer because of the many parties vying to win their vote. The referendum put power to decide the issue directly into the hands of the voters rather than the delegation of decisions that occurs when electing a government in a general election.

Many people would have exercised their referendum vote as a protest against Cameron's government for its imposition of extremely divisive austerity measures that have hit the poor and vulnerable the most. Cameron is seen as acting unfairly by large sections of the population, so the referendum became a prime opportunity to give him notice of the strength of popular dissent.

Voting Leave was also a chance to cock-a-snook at the establishment and status quo at a time when social divisions are growing and the wealth gap is widening. Countless "respected" organisations and personalities, including US President Obama, were called in to express a view on the Referendum. In fact, they were viewed with a degree of suspicion for telling people how to vote. Every day there appeared a new report, statement, interview, warning people not to take the risk of voting to leave the EU. The European Commission President Donald Tusk even absurdly warned of "the end of civilisation".

The IMF, World Bank, NATO, the CBI and the large corporations, all issued statements effectively instructing voters how to exercise their vote. The chief executives of many leading companies wrote letters to their own employees advising them to vote Remain.

Voting Leave was also a chance to cock-a-snook at the establishment and status quo at a time when social divisions are growing and the wealth gap is widening. Countless "respected" organisations and personalities, including US President Obama, were called in to express a view on the Referendum. In fact, they were viewed with a degree of suspicion for telling people how to vote. Every day there appeared a new report, statement, interview, warning people not to take the risk of voting to leave the EU. The European Commission President Donald Tusk even absurdly warned of "the end of civilisation".



Photograph by Saponifier, English, <https://pixabay.com/en/british-guard-horse-soldier-royal-958132/>

Those celebrities and business people who came out in favour of Remain appeared like the world's wealthiest one percent of the population huddling together in a desperate attempt to defend their privileges. Fashion models, Hollywood actors, international footballers, billionaires, bankers, comedians, musicians, many of whom neither lived in the UK nor paid taxes to the Exchequer, were effectively telling people how to cast their vote because it was in their own interests. It was the elite ranged against the people. This exposed the fact that the super-rich one percent enjoyed a glamorous lifestyle that is as far removed from the daily existence of the average person today as was the life of an ancient Roman emperor to his slaves or as Cleopatra was to the sweated labourers who built the pyramids.

There were hardly disguised threats of the loss of jobs, mass layoffs, cuts in pay, higher rents, increased food prices and negative impact on mortgage repayments. It seemed all too blatantly orchestrated. It even felt like a conspiracy with the MI5 involvement suspected. This negative campaigning for the EU was to stand in stark contrast to the simple message from the Leave campaign, which was summed up in the clear but effective slogan, "take back control", which could be interpreted positively. The Remain campaign was dismissed as "Project Fear".

It is significant that when Nigel Farage made what was seen as a victory speech in the early hours of Friday 24th June, he went out of his way to claim the result as a vote against the "merchant banks", an acknowledgement of people's anger at the role of the banks in provoking the 2008 financial crisis which had resulted in the long period of austerity. Thus, the leaders of the Leave campaign had come to recognise and sought to exploit popular sentiments against continued austerity and the people's lingering anger at the banks. The claim by Leave campaigners that the billions of pounds that the UK donates to Brussels as part of its membership obligations could instead be used at home to fund public services like the NHS is another example of how austerity was to be a factor in the Referendum campaign.

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This campaign strategy seriously backfired. Voters seem to have been angered by the transparent attempt to manipulate public sentiments by the cynical use of celebrities exploiting their popularity with the public. For example, some voters in Sheffield who supported leaving the EU were interviewed on BBC Radio 4 on the day after the Referendum where they expressed anger at the patronising tactics of the Remain campaign. "Do they think we are idiots just because we have a Northern accent?" one Sheffield voter asked; and, "they think we are all flat caps and whippets", one woman complained.

"Take back control" effectively meant that the ability to decide one's own future and to run one's own affairs was a possibility once again against the perception that too many essential political powers had been seceded to Brussels. Parts of the political left continued to dismiss the EU as a "bosses' club" and a business cartel that was imposing a brutal neo-liberal political agenda on European economies. The crippling of Greece and mass youth unemployment seen in countries like Spain and Portugal were frequently cited as evidence of where the EU was getting it wrong. Looked at from this perspective the issue of migration appears to be quite a minor consideration.

It is safe to conclude therefore that the success of Vote Leave in the Referendum was as much an expression of class conflict and opposition to privilege as it was simply about control by faceless European bureaucrats in Brussels, who are unelected and cannot be removed by the normal political process. The Referendum meant that they could be removed once and for all in a once in a lifetime vote. It was understood that no such opportunity to vote on the relationship of Britain and the EU would ever be made available to people again perhaps for decades if at all. "Take back control" effectively meant that the ability to decide one's own future and to run one's own affairs was a possibility once again against the perception that too many essential political powers had been seceded to Brussels. Parts of the political left continued to dismiss the EU as a "bosses' club" and a business cartel that was imposing a brutal neo-liberal political agenda on European economies. The crippling of Greece and mass youth unemployment seen in countries like Spain and Portugal were frequently cited as evidence of where the EU was getting it wrong. Looked at from this perspective the issue of migration appears to be quite a minor consideration.

But by deciding to opt out after spending the last 45 years within the EU, the UK has taken a great leap into the unknown; whether it will emerge into the darkness or into a bright future will only be determined in the future. All that can be stated with certainty at the moment is that it will take several years to create new relationships and set the country on a new steady course. A period of instability seems inevitable at least in the initial weeks and months ahead. "There will be bumps in the road", was the prosaic admission made by leading Leave campaigner, Michael Gove MP, a comment widely derided.





In their *new book*, [Miranda Forsyth](#) and [Sue Farran](#) consider the challenges of creating appropriate intellectual property frameworks in developing economies, focusing on small island states in the Pacific. The book draws together policy considerations, theories of development and law and empirical studies. It offers a competing model of intellectual property regulation to the usual Western framework, based on local conceptions of culture and indigenous understandings about use, knowledge and transfer of intangible property. This post is an edited version of Miranda's discussion of the book at a RegNet 'bookclub' earlier this year.

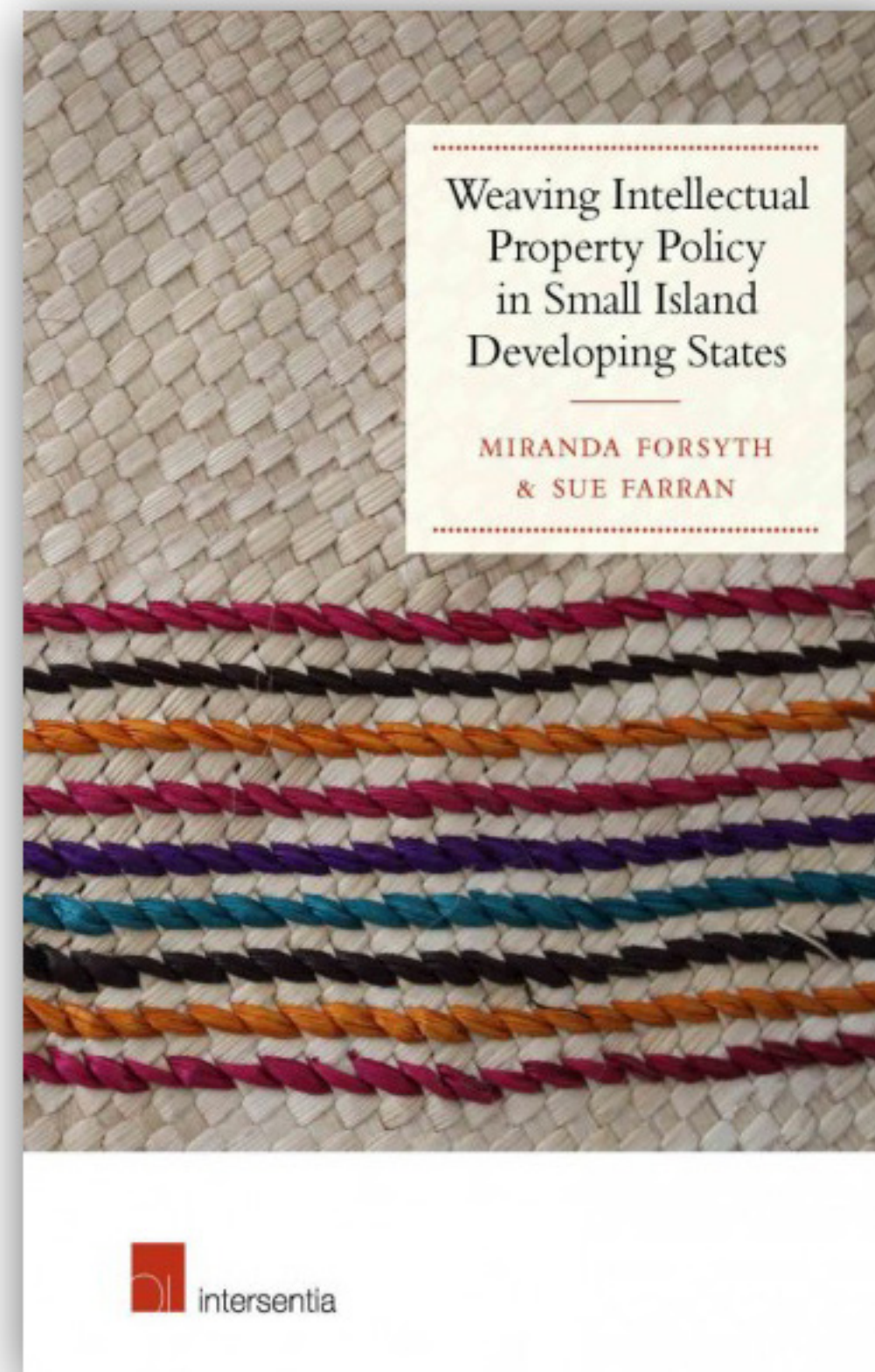
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MIRANDA FORSYTH WEAVING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY IN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

The starting point for *Weaving intellectual property* policy is that Pacific islands have become a site of global pressure to enact an increasing number of intellectual property (IP) laws. In response to this pressure, since 2000 there has been a proliferation of new legislation and policies dealing with IP in countries in the region.

The pressure to enact new IP laws comes from a range of different sources. There is pressure to join the World Trade Organisation and its main treaty package dealing with IP: the Agreement on Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS). The accession packages of a number of Pacific Island countries have high IP requirements – known as 'TRIPS Plus' requirements.

Aside from pressure to join Free Trade Agreements, such as the European Union's Economic Partnership Agreement, there is a more ideological pressure to introduce these laws that comes through a discourse we term 'IP = Development'. This pressure is exerted through technical capacity building programs from international organisations such as the World Intellectual Property Organisation. Whilst these have become more nuanced in their approach in the past decade, the 'IP = Development' discourse is pervasive.

Meanwhile, there has been no real pushback from within Pacific island states. This reflects the lack of public awareness of the problems that these types of frameworks may create in relation to access to knowledge, pharmaceuticals and seeds. There are no civil society movements that are really tuned into these issues. Instead, artists and the musicians who are supported by the Australasian Performing Rights Association ([APRA](#)), push for strong IP rights.



Across the region there is pressure to identify ‘customary norms’ and then to instrumentalise them within state legal systems or in modified customary systems. There is a move towards doing this for traditional knowledge in many countries across the region, although only the Cook Islands and Niue have actually promulgated laws in relation to traditional knowledge. The problem with enacting such laws, however, is that it removes a lot of the flexibilities that come with how custom has traditionally operated; flexibilities that have allowed it to respond in creative and helpful ways when faced with unexpected obstacles.

We suggest that the move towards more intellectual property regulation in the region is taking place based on a number of misconceptions:

The first is that the Pacific islands do not already have intellectual property regulation. In fact, Pacific islands societies are based on a knowledge economy. There are strong customary rules over who has the right to access certain knowledge and cultural heritage, such as songs, carving and other designs.

[Lamont Lindstrom](#), a distinguished Pacific anthropologist writes:

The traditional pursuit of knowledge in this part of the Pacific is not organized in terms of what we like to call free intellectual inquiry; rather it is rigidly territorialized so that unless one possesses the requisite copyrights, entire domains of knowledge remain off-limits within public, serious talk.

For example, the rights to carve tam tams (slit drums) on the island of Ambrym in Vanuatu, is strictly controlled. Families purchase the rights to make two or three headed tam tams with wealth such as pigs, but today also money.

So knowledge regulation continues today in the Pacific islands – knowledge is power, and as such, it is not automatically shared.

The second misconception behind the push for new IP laws relates to how customary law is said to work and the way it can be observed working in practice. Pacific island countries are sites where customary law continues to exert a real influence, both by itself and in the ways in which it has become entangled with state law and modern conceptions of law.

Across the region there is pressure to identify ‘customary norms’ and then to instrumentalise them within state legal systems or in modified customary systems. There is a move towards doing this for traditional knowledge in many countries across the region, although only the Cook Islands and Niue have actually promulgated laws in relation to traditional knowledge. The problem with enacting such laws, however, is that it removes a lot of the flexibilities that come with how custom has traditionally operated; flexibilities that have allowed it to respond in creative and helpful ways when faced with unexpected obstacles.

The third misconception, which relates to the one just discussed, is that a Western real property system can simply substitute for existing customary conceptions of property without creating any significant problems. In fact, such substitution has given rise to enormous problems in many, if not all, Pacific island countries.

An example of this is drawn from my field-work: [meet Croc](#).

Croc comes from England but has been living in the Cook Islands for a number of years and doing tattooing using a traditional Polynesian technique, the first to do so since the practice was suppressed by the English Missionaries in the 1800s. Croc did his apprenticeship in traditional Polynesian tattooing in New Zealand, with a Maori who had been taught by a Samoan Master. After learning the skills, Croc met a Cook islander and returned with her to Cook Islands. When I interviewed him, he had just formalised an agreement to take on a young Cook Islander as an apprentice, thus renewing the cycle of knowledge transfer that had been interrupted by the missionaries. Often when customary rules of ‘ownership’ are examined more closely, it becomes apparent that it is not really ownership that is being discussed, but stewardship or other more complicated combinations of rights. So I am wary of attempts to codify custom in state laws, especially when the term ownership is used.

The third misconception, which relates to the one just discussed, is that a Western real property system can simply substitute for existing customary conceptions of property without creating any significant problems. In fact, such substitution has given rise to enormous problems in many, if not all, Pacific island countries.



Tatau Rarotonga, Image: [CrocTatau](#)

The book is an attempt to respond to the misconceptions just described, and to push back on the state-centric grid of IP regulation that is being created in the region. We have also tried to think about what a pluralistic approach to IP regulation would be like, one that really takes into account the existing IP regulatory frameworks in the Pacific islands and works with them to meet the modern challenges of regulation, including the need to be compliant with TRIPS and other Free Trade Agreements.

[Colin Filer](#) refers to the ‘ideology of land ownership’ and we have used this concept in relation to intangible property as the ‘ideology of ownership’. What this ideology does is transform a series of existing relationships between people into an endless dispute about entitlements to a limited resource. It is a process in which, generally, the more vulnerable members of society – women and children, have their interests undermined by powerful men.

As Sue and I argue in the book, ignoring the existing customary regulatory systems around both tangible and intangible property can have truly destructive impacts. This is especially the case as these social norms are often deeply intertwined with questions of identity.

An example of this was brought home during the course of my fieldwork. Makareta Matemosi drew on her traditional knowledge to create designs for a local airline. The airline subsequently sought trademark protection for the masi designs, and there was great consternation in the community that other traditional artists would be prevented from using the designs in their own work.

Makareta Matemosi said to me:

At first I was really happy, but then when the trademark issue came I really regretted that I had done [the work for the airline]. That is the best word to use to express it, regret. I did not know that people would complain. It has really badly affected me and my family. My children told me that they read about people complaining about me on facebook, and there were all sorts of stories going around ... All this has really spoiled my business, it has not recovered since then. People thought that I got paid a lot of money but I did not, and now my business is really small. This is a problem because my husband does not work, I am the only one who earned money with my masi making business. Now I cannot pay the kids' school fees.

The book is an attempt to respond to the misconceptions just described, and to push back on the state-centric grid of IP regulation that is being created in the region. We have also tried to think about what a pluralistic approach to IP regulation would be like, one that really takes into account the existing IP regulatory frameworks in the Pacific islands and works with them to meet the modern challenges of regulation, including the need to be compliant with TRIPS and other Free Trade Agreements. This was certainly the most challenging aspects of writing the book, and we are certainly not done yet thinking it through.

What Sue and I have tried more than anything to do in this book is to destabilise the notion that global IP laws are the ‘only’ way to regulate knowledge, and to suggest that much can be learnt from the value that Pacific Islanders place on relationships in regard to the generation and sharing of knowledge.

How would such an approach change the way things currently happen?

It would ensure a broader range of processes and practices are available to build the relationship between state and non-state regulatory systems. Instead of a focus on detailed rules and state agencies, attention could be paid to identifying values that underpin the regulation of knowledge, and the development of processes for bringing the right people together for dialogue and negotiation. [Peter Drahos](#) calls this ‘regulatory convening’. This would give centrality to underlying cultural values, such as respect for the wisdom of elders, connections with the spirit world, the primacy of social relationships, and connections with place.

What Sue and I have tried more than anything to do in this book is to destabilise the notion that global IP laws are the ‘only’ way to regulate knowledge, and to suggest that much can be learnt from the value that Pacific Islanders place on relationships in regard to the generation and sharing of knowledge.



Narco Diplomacy: Foreign Policy of the United Wa State Army

Abstract

Once a remote, uncontrollable region, Shan State in North Myanmar is home to the 'Wild' Wa people, who make up 10 percent of its population. Nonetheless, with 30,000 active soldiers, the United Wa State Army (UWSA), is *prima inter pares* in the narcotics production zone of the Golden Triangle and one of the largest rebel armies in the world. Part of the UWSA's success can be attributed to their skilful diplomacy with state and regional actors, capitalising on connections gained from their time in the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) to build vital trade and military alliances. In light of political change in the 2015 Myanmar Elections, this article aims to explore 'foreign' policy options for the UWSA with the Myanmar Government, the Chinese Government, narcotics groups in Thailand and rebel groups in the Shan State.

Introduction

In 1968, under pressure from the government, the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) retreated northwards from Central Myanmar to the Shan State, a mountainous region bordering China. In the subsequent years, bolstered by Chinese economic and military support, the CPB consolidated its position, drew its strength from mountain minorities like the Wa and Kokang, and established itself as the kingpin of the Golden Triangle. In 1989, the CPB fractured into smaller groups like the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) and the United Wa State Army (UWSA). These groups morphed into opium cultivation and heroin manufacturing powerhouses, and by the 2000s the UWSA had become the world's largest narcotics distributor. Today, the UWSA's methamphetamine-based narcotics industry is concentrated in factories to its southern exclave (*see Figure 1*) with a particular emphasis on manufacturing yaba, a caffeine-methamphetamine mixture party drug consumed almost exclusively in Southeast Asia. Drug money has fuelled a narco-military force comparable to the Myanmar Army, the Tatmadaw. The foreign relations of the UWSA are hence dominated by its ideological goals of autonomy and its reliance on narcotics production and distribution.

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Figure 1: Map of Shan State with Key Areas of Influence and Trade Routes (*Prepared by the author*). *Red*: Main amphetamine distribution routes. Amphetamine labs are concentrated in the southern territory of UWSA. *Purple*: Ancillary trade and arms smuggling routes used by the UWSA. **A**

The notable refusal of the UWSA and other allied large factions to sign the NCA signifies a deep distrust between state and factional actors. In November 2015, the UWSA hosted the a summit at Pangkham, the Shan state's de facto capital, for factions not party to the NCA. A joint statement expressed solidarity in fighting for an amended constitution, and a commitment to dialogue with the newly elected government [1] with the mutually stated goal of national reconciliation.

Relations with Myanmar Government

Peace negotiations lasting over several months saw eight of the fifteen key rebel groups signing the government-led Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) in October 2015. A mere trust-building mechanism with broad guidelines on discussions towards a federal state, the NCA is not a comprehensive ceasefire or conflict resolution agreement. While unlikely to achieve peace on its own, it represents a platform for dialogue and a key milestone on the peace process. The notable refusal of the UWSA and other allied large factions to sign the NCA signifies a deep distrust between state and factional actors. In November 2015, the UWSA hosted the a summit at Pangkham, the Shan state's de facto capital, for factions not party to the NCA. A joint statement expressed solidarity in fighting for an amended constitution, and a commitment to dialogue with the newly elected government [1] with the mutually stated goal of national reconciliation.

Results of the 2015 parliamentary elections has placed power in civilian hands in Myanmar. And this is likely to radically impact the nature of relations between UWSA and the government. The National League of Democracy (NLD) which ran on a platform of peace and national reconciliation, provides an opportunity to nationalist groups to fight for further federalism. The NLD has promised a federal union for ethnic minorities in its election manifesto, while remaining silent on details regarding such a structure. The NLD will probably focus initially on consolidating their power in Myanmar heartlands. Assigning more autonomy to the restive border regions at least temporarily will relieve government liability during the embittered process of taking over political authority from entrenched institutions.

The Tatmadaw's insistence that groups adhere to a six-point principle institutionalising the role of the military in political decisions makes assimilation a bitter pill for rebels. Decades of conflict have bred mistrust and enmity between rebel groups and the military and the constitution essentially allows the Tatmadaw to act without civilian oversight. With a quarter of the seats in both the upper and lower house, the Tatmadaw still holds great political authority in Myanmar, employing the implicit threat of a coup d'état. Dismantling the monolithic grip of the military over Myanmar will be high on the NLD's agenda, and co-opting rebel militant groups could help restrain its impunity. It is likely that the UWSA will cooperate with any agenda that involves weakening the military, and are natural allies to the NLD's cause. Nonetheless, while an opportunity to grow at the expense of the Tatmadaw, the UWSA must take care not to fall prey to a 'divide-and-conquer' tactic. Expending strength and resources unnecessarily against the Tatmadaw will strengthen the NLD, who may then crush both their power rivals at once.

UWSA's relations with China are essentially a continuation of the CPB era, when shared ideologies resulted in close military and economic support. Today, Sino-Wa relations are based on shared ideas of mutual security, economic growth and cultural soft power. Chinese investment has been a key driver of economic growth in licit industries and infrastructure in Wa territory. Guangdong-based investors received a UWSA-backed monopoly over Pangkham's thriving casino [3] while the logging industry and infrastructure development across UWSA territory is supported primarily by Yunnan-based construction companies.

However, the narcotics trade remains a significant obstacle to UWSA and NLD relations. International entities see the NLD government as a more cooperative partner for drug eradication programmes compared to the USDP and are likely to increase pressure on the government to combat the narcotic barons. Clamping down on the narcotics trade will trigger heated opposition from all rebel groups who use it to fund their operations. Ultimately, strangling narcotics production is contingent on the availability of alternative sources of revenue. UNODC's efforts in conjunction with foreign state donors to promote coffee, macademia and rice agriculture such as RASC25 in the Wa Region [2], have not made much of an impact in the region. However, regime change may make this option finally viable. A well-executed eradication campaign hence rests on tripartite cooperation between rebel groups to enforce policies, the government to provide frameworks, and international polities to back it with funding and expertise. At the end of the day, despite ideological inclinations, the NLD has shown itself to be a pragmatic political actor when required. The illusion of commitment to combating the narcotics trade is enough for the NLD to relieve international pressure while allowing narco-armies to counterbalance their political rivals in the Tatmadaw until genuine national reconciliation can be achieved.

In the short- to medium- term, the UWSA should leverage on the challenges of the NLD to achieve semi-legal status and expand for the mutually beneficial objectives of combating the military and building a federal union. However, in the long-term, Wa authorities should recognise that disarmament and legitimacy is the best way to achieve sustainable development for their people. Of course, convincing Wa leaders to give up their narcotic gold mine will likely be an uphill struggle.

Relations with China

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China's war on the drugs focuses heavily on heroin, which was trafficked through Wa territory. Under Chinese pressure, the UWSA declared its territories an opium-free zone in 2005. Despite a four percent increase in opium production from 2013 to 2014[6], this has caused the Golden Triangle's share of the global opiate market to drop to 15 percent in 2014 from 70 percent in 1990 [7]. To compensate, the UWSA transformed its southern jungle border with Thailand into a massive methamphetamine factory, dotting the region with labs producing yaba for export to Thailand through the border town of Tachileik and to a lesser extent, crystal meth to China.

Relations with China *contd...*

Chinese technological transfer has provided alternative revenue sources. Considering the fact that the large swathe from India to Thailand is replete with armed movements, small arms trade has become a vital industry for the Wa. Chinese factories across the border supply production technology for Type 56 rifles, RPD LMGs and even PMN-type antipersonnel mines. However, factories in the Wa state are capable of producing armaments independently. The scale of production is unknown, but UWSA arms have been found in militant caches from Nagaland to Pattani. A Chinese crackdown in 2008 has also seen Chinese producers move factories of counterfeit consumer products like DVDs and clothing into Mong La[5] (*see Figure 1*). These illicit industries, while destabilising to region, pose little threat to China and represent a powerful source of revenue without harming cross-border relations.

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To avoid jeopardising growing friendships with the Myanmar government, Chinese political and military support has been overt but deniable. Chinese diplomatic representatives attended UWSA ceremonies in 2009 [10], and UWSA high officials continue to request for China to mediate peace negotiations [11]. Alongside small arms, UWSA purportedly own sophisticated materiel such as Chinese Type 96 howitzers, armoured fighting vehicles [12] and even Mil Mi-17 attack helicopters. Acquisition of such heavy equipment implies Ministry of State Security complicity rather than small-scale arms dealing networks.

Funding the UWSA's various projects necessitates maintaining the methamphetamine trade, as no other source of revenue is likely to be large enough in the long term. However, the continued trend of meth abuse in China is likely to be viewed as a social and security threat in the medium- to long-term.

A complex chain of intermediaries links Myanmar drugs with Thai consumers (*see Figure 2*). However, UWSA influence is mostly limited to production and trafficking to ethnic Chinese large wholesalers or *chao pho*, who act as Godfather-figures in a geographically exclusive multi-tier distribution channels that see drugs change hands an average of seven times [15] before reaching consumers. This uneasy peace allows Bangkok to overlook the persecution of these *chao pho* who command high status and respect in their communities.

China may be willing to tolerate the UWSA in the short term. Myanmar is a critical link on China's ambitious 'One Road-One Belt' policy, and if trends persist, official relations may outweigh the interests of border ethnic groups. Hence, over time, the UWSA must find a way to shut off narcotic flows towards China to avoid angering their big brother to the North. Instead, the UWSA could pursue flows towards India, where average tablet retail prices of US\$12 remain high compared to US\$5 in Thailand [13]. These are medium-term solutions at best, and continued Chinese investment is essential to the long-term goal of reversing economic dependence on narcotics.

Relations with Thai Narcotics Groups

Thailand is the largest market for the UWSA's primarily yaba based narcotics industry. At the same time, it also supplies the chemical inputs. In 2012, the Department of Special Investigations discovered forged air cargo manifests for two billion cold tablets. The main input, pseudoephedrine, is obtained from cold tablets smuggled through Bangkok from Taiwan and South Korea. Yaba has become an entrenched social phenomenon, cutting across social groups from menial labourers to investment bankers, while yaba trafficking in Thailand has become a US\$30billion industry [14] of which an estimated 75 percent comes from Myanmar. Typically, pills are smuggled into eastwards into Laos and then southwards into Northern Thailand. (*see Figure 1*) Thai authorities see the UWSA as a menace to be eradicated, not a legitimate entity to be negotiated with. As both consumer and supplier, the UWSA must counteract Thai eradication policies while strengthening ties to Thai drug barons.

A complex chain of intermediaries links Myanmar drugs with Thai consumers (*see Figure 2*). However, UWSA influence is mostly limited to production and trafficking to ethnic Chinese large wholesalers or *chao pho*, who act as Godfather-figures in a geographically exclusive multi-tier distribution channels that see drugs change hands an average of seven times [15] before reaching consumers. This uneasy peace allows Bangkok to overlook the persecution of these *chao pho* who command high status and respect in their communities. In 2003, an impassioned War on Drugs by then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra terrorised low-level drug wholesalers and retailers, but left the *chao pho* and their structures relatively intact. A chief reason is that the *chao pho* exercise degrees of control over the law enforcement agencies through their extensive networks of political patronage and *nakleng* underlings which coerce law enforcement and government at every level, placing them effectively above the law [16].

In 2009, Thailand resurrected Task Force 399, now renamed the 151st Special Warfare Company, a controversial elite anti-narcotic police force previously shut down due to concerns over its extrajudicial tactics and disregard for international boundaries [18]. In 2015, the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) launched the Safe Mekong Coordination Centre, which has seized 30 tonnes of precursor chemicals, rather than focussing solely on the finished product [19].

Product	Owner	Location/Destination	Weekly Pill Turnover
Pseudoephdrine-based medication or precursor chemicals	UWSA-affiliated Myanmarese drug lord	Industrial cities through UWSA-affiliated shell companies (e.g. bangkok or Chiang Mai)	
UWSA-protected couriers		Border towns to UWSA territory	
Bulk yaba pills		Meth factories in UWSA territory	>10,000,000
UWSA-protected couriers		Border towns to USWA territory	>01,000,000
Trucks of yaba pills	Chao pot through large wholesalers	Border towns/cities* (e.g. HuayXai or Chiang Rai)	100,000-700,000
Boxes of yaba pills	Medium wholesalers	Consumer cities (e.g. Bangkok or Hat Yai)	<10,000
Packets of yaba pills	Small wholesalers	Street retailers	<200
Packets of yaba pills	Retailers	Individual consumers	<50

Table 2: Drug Trafficking Process from Myanmar to Thailand [17]

Relations with Thai Narcotics Groups *contd...*

In 2009, Thailand resurrected Task Force 399, now renamed the 151st Special Warfare Company, a controversial elite anti-narcotic police force previously shut down due to concerns over its extrajudicial tactics and disregard for international boundaries [18]. In 2015, the Office of Narcotics Control Board (ONCB) launched the Safe Mekong Coordination Centre, which has seized 30 tonnes of precursor chemicals, rather than focussing solely on the finished product [19]. While the overall impact on the drug trade remains miniscule, redirecting the oppression and interception of drug trafficking higher on the production chain represents an unprecedented threat towards the UWSA and its operations. In anticipation, the UWSA should begin to diversify its sources of precursor chemicals even at a higher cost.

A bolder step would be to move away from pseudoephedrine-based production techniques, and diversify towards phenylacetone-based methamphetamine production. While phenylacetic acid is used in 78 percent of all meth production worldwide[20], in 2013, only 95 kilograms were seized in Myanmar compared to 6.5 tons in China. With authorities concentrating on crushing pseudoephedrine, it is likely phenylacetone-based production will be overlooked for now.

The staunchest allies of the UWSA are its erstwhile CPB comrades (see Introduction): the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) in Mongla and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in Kokang as well as the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) based in Wan Hai. The network of alliances preserves the validity and efficacy of trade routes across Shan State, enabling the profitable trade in narcotics, jade, timber and rare minerals. Nonetheless, alliances and enmities are fluid and subject to shifting priorities, with self-preservation as the main priority.

As an indicator of consumption rates, the quantity of methamphetamine pills seized has increased tenfold from 25 million in 2008 to 250 million in 2013[21]. In the face of rising consumption patterns, *chao pho* rarely engage in turf conflict, choosing instead to compete over new consumers. Nonetheless, the UWSA's fear of internecine strife between the *chao pho* may well become a reality once the market becomes saturated. War between the *chao pho* would disrupt logistics and transportation networks, draw attention to the yaba trade and result in large-scale police crackdowns.

Conflict is an inherent risk to the drug trade, but the UWSA can take measures to restrain and control involved parties. One method that seems to have results is providing a scapegoat in the form of transnational criminal organisations, which gives the government enough positive press to lay off the local and regional actors. An entire special task force has been mobilised in 2015 with the sole intent of targeting foreign criminal gangs[22] and the high profile arrests of American kingpin Joseph Hunt in 2013 and British drug dealer Micheal France in 2014 are contrasted to a conspicuous absence of high-profile Thai crime barons persecuted. The UWSA should pressure the chaopho to support the use of foreign gangs as a distraction through the judicial application of their patronage systems in order to prevent the encroachment of the narcotics trade. However, in the medium-term, the UWSA should aim to integrate itself into a legal political framework under the NLD where it can find internationally recognised refuge and backing for legitimate economic activities.

Relations with other rebel groups in Shan State

The staunchest allies of the UWSA are its erstwhile CPB comrades (see Introduction): the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) in Mongla and the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) in Kokang as well as the Shan State Army-North (SSA-N) based in Wan Hai. The network of alliances preserves the validity and efficacy of trade routes across Shan State, enabling the profitable trade in narcotics, jade, timber and rare minerals. Nonetheless, alliances and enmities are fluid and subject to shifting priorities, with self-preservation as the main priority.

‘Alliance’ indicates economic and political solidarity rather than mutual defence. The MNDAA was crushed by the Tatmadaw once in 2009 and most decisively in June 2015, resulting in the loss of the Kokang region (see Figure 3) to the North. In October 2015, the Tatmadaw launched an on-going offensive against Wan Hai, committing heavy weaponry and large numbers[23]. The UWSA has remained passive in the face of attacks on its allies, likely because they do not represent a large enough strategic threat to its existence or operations. Further, aggrandising disagreements with the Tatmadaw and jeopardising the ceasefire after a hard-earned peace deal in 2013 would be a disproportionate sacrifice for the preservation of allies in peripheral territories.

The Shan State Army-South (SSA-S) has been a rival of the UWSA since 2006, [27] when combined UWSA-Tatmadaw operations resulted in weakened SSA-S influence over South Shan. Since then, low-level conflicts and confrontations have persisted, including a 2012 siege of an SSA-S camp by UWSA in Eastern Shan [28]. On 15 October 2015, the SSA-S was one of eight signatories to the NCA [29], effectively dividing Shan groups into two separate camps. The division should not be overstated as neither are hostile to each other nor is the NCA a binding alliance with the Tatmadaw, but the two factions essentially represent diverging strategies of relations with the government.

Relations with other rebel groups in Shan State *contd...*

Acknowledging this, the Tatmadaw appears to be engaging in a manner of salami tactics by steadily enveloping the UWSA. Alongside attacks on buffer states and allies, the Tatmadaw has also strengthened military strength throughout the Shan State. In 2011, the Eastern Central Regional Military Command (ECC) was established at a strategic location at Kho Lam blocking UWSA access to the Middle Shan State, the ECC has since engaged in clashes with the SSA-N to secure the west of the UWSA. In addition, the Wanh seng Regional Operations Command was formed in 2011 along the route between Mongla and Tachilek. The build-up of military strength throughout the Shan State is designed to divide the different groups and control important routes. The UWSA is right to stay out of conflict with the Tatmadaw, but should the Tatmadaw be allowed to advance unchecked, the UWSA may soon find itself under siege.

In contrast, the UWSA strongly contested government efforts in 2008 to reclaim control over the town of Mong Pawk in order to maintain its connection to the NDAA in Mongla.[24] The NDAA's prime location makes it strategically critical for the continued survival of the UWSA. If the Tatmadaw manages to gain control of the Mongla region, it would cut off the manufacturing hub in southern half of the Wa state from the administration in Pangkham, while simultaneously strangling and denying trade routes leading to Laos and Thailand, shutting down financing and ultimately present an existential threat to the UWSA. In order to avoid a similar situation to the MNDAA, arming and fortifying the small 3,000 strong army of the NDAA will be a priority for the UWSA. At the same time, the Mongla region has been a powerhouse for economic growth with the construction of the Mongla hydropower dam, retail and tourism centres and large-scale agricultural expansion [25]. A seminar held in August 2015[26] discussed the opening of the Thai border with southern UWSA territory towards Mong Ton to businessmen, indicating a desire to rejuvenate cross-border trade. Furthering legitimate economic links at an administrative level would create a viable economic region along the Thai-Chinese-Laotian-Myanmarese border centred on both licit trade, making national reconciliation a financially viable option.

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The size and influence of the UWSA allows it to engage in direct negotiations with the government, and in fact, disadvantages it in group consensus. However, as one of the largest and best equipped among the signatories the relatively small SSA-S can essentially command the combined political will and bargaining power of the eight groups. In order to prevent the Tatmadaw from turning the groups against each other, the UWSA must work to normalise relations with the SSA-S.



Figure 3: Factional Map of Rebel Areas of Influence and Military Garrisons in Shan State (Prepared by the author), Tatmadaw: North-Eastern Command (Lashio) – 30x Battalions; Eastern Command (Taunggyi) – 42x Battalions; Triangle Region Command (Kengtung) – 23x Battalions; Eastern Central Command (Kho Lam) – unknown; Laukkai Regional Operations Command and Wanh seng Regional Operations Command – 8x Battalions

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The mainstay of any UWSA strategy focusses on preserving economic strength by maintaining the narcotics trade in order to campaign for political autonomy. In the past, the narco-army was capable of holding back government-led offensives, capitalising on the general state of anarchy in the Shan State to drive the isolated government into a stalemate. However, as its relations with the rest of the world improve, the government in Myanmar will grow stronger and the rise of the NLD would propel the country into the mainstream international community. In light of this, the UWSA risks becoming irrelevant, and devolving into a criminal gang will cause it lose backing in Beijing, rendering it an easy target for annihilation by Thai, Chinese and Myanmarese authorities.

Relations with other rebel groups in Shan State *contd...*

The rise of the NLD and their emphasis on national reconciliation makes unity among the rebel groups of the Shan State increasingly important. United, the groups can pursue a wider stance and greater degrees of autonomy for all parties. It is in the interest of the government to fragment the various factions in order to limit the bargaining power of each one. As the largest, richest and most influential faction, the UWSA should work to assume effective leadership over the region in order to maximise political gain in the impending reconciliation process.

Conclusion

The mainstay of any UWSA strategy focusses on preserving economic strength by maintaining the narcotics trade in order to campaign for political autonomy. In the past, the narco-army was capable of holding back government-led offensives, capitalising on the general state of anarchy in the Shan State to drive the isolated government into a stalemate. However, as its relations with the rest of the world improve, the government in Myanmar will grow stronger and the rise of the NLD would propel the country into the mainstream international community. In light of this, the UWSA risks becoming irrelevant, and devolving into a criminal gang will cause it lose backing in Beijing, rendering it an easy target for annihilation by Thai, Chinese and Myanmarese authorities. Sustaining political capital will rely on maintain economic relevance through links to China and the drug trade in Thailand and political relevance through links to rebel groups and a superior military. A superior strategy would be to pursue legitimate economic and political interests, integrate into the legitimate political society and bargain for autonomy for the Wa people while its political capital runs strong.

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End Notes

[1]Shan Herald Agency for News (2015)

[2]UNODC (2009)

[3]Ling, Xiao (2005)

[4] National Narcotics Control Commission (2014)

[5]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014)

[6]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014)

[7]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2014)

[8]Zhang, Sheldon and Chin, Ko-lin (2014)

[9]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2013)

[10]Dinger, Larry (2010)

[11]Weng, Lawi (2015)

[12]Davis, Anthony (2015)

[13]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015)

[14]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015)

[15]Treerat, Nualnoi (2000)

* Consensus is divided as to whether or not the drugs are exchanged at the border or in Bangkok. It is likely both types of exchanges are taking place at the same time.

[16]Fabre (2002)

[17]Lintner, Bertil and Black, Micheal (2009) and Chouvy, Pierre-Arnoud et Meissonier, Joel (2002)

[18]Asia Times (2009)

[19]Chiangrai Times (2015)

[20]International Narcotics Control Board (2014)

[21]United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2015)

[22]Bangkok Post (2015)

[23]Radio Free Asia (2015)

[24]Shan Herald Agency for News (2012)

[25]The Irrawady (2015)

[26]Shan Herald Agency for News (2015)

[27]The Irrawady (2006)

[28]Myanmar Peace Monitor (2014)

[29]Restoration Council of the Shan States (2015)

[30]Myanmar Peace Monitor (2014)



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Mariana Prandini Assis and Pablo Holmes A Coup in Brazil, Despite Legal Formalities

The latest political events in Brazil have caused [perplexity around the globe](#). The country once deemed to be not only an [emerging global power](#), but also a positive example of democracy and stability in a region with a long history of political turmoil and authoritarianism, has been engulfed by a deep political crisis. The most immediate result of this crisis has been the ousting of the center-left Workers' Party government this past March, in power for thirteen years, having won the last four elections in a row. The secondary effects of the crisis have mostly affected [minorities](#) and poor people: the interim government, in less than a month, has already dismantled important social policies on cash transfers and housing, and shut down ministries dedicated to agrarian reform, human rights, women's and racial issues.

While these secondary effects may be seen as even more serious and urgent, as they signal a turn to a bizarre combination of [neoliberal policies](#) and [conservative moralism](#), we want to address the more immediate effect of the crisis.

Many within the country and abroad have observed that the change in power is not without precedent. There are plenty of historical examples of backward oligarchies conspiring for and achieving positions of power in Latin American "Banana Republics." Journalists, intellectuals and social movements have [claimed that the ouster](#) of President Dilma Rousseff, the first woman to hold the office, can be described as a coup d'état. And although the transition to an interim government, led by her vice-president and mainly formed by prominent former opposition politicians, went on under apparent legality, latest revelations of the negotiations over the impeachment strengthen the claim that something went really wrong with Brazil's democracy.

Our aim is to show how discourses about "fighting corruption" were [strategically](#) deployed to stage a coup whose ultimate goal was in fact to keep various corrupt networks in place. Moreover, a very thin understanding of legality was marshaled so that the coup d'état did not appear as such.

Corruption must certainly be condemned, but as a social phenomenon, it is a constant feature of Brazilian political history: no government in the entire republican legacy has been exempt from a major corruption scandal. And getting rid of corruption has been a frequent premise deployed by those who have attempted to break with constitutional democracy in the past. In this sense, while on the surface this is the framing adopted in the current situation, corruption in fact can hardly be the reason why President Rousseff is facing an impeachment process. Or better said, the real reason is corruption on the other side.

A brief history of the crisis

Dilma Rousseff was elected with more than 52% of the popular vote in 2014. By the time of the second electoral round, Brazilian voters were well aware of the many corruption scandals involving her party. During the campaign, not only was the *Mensalão* vote-buying scandal again brought to view, but rumors concerning the state oil company Petrobrás became the object of broad attention and debate. And while the most popular media in Brazil have been keen to publicize possible connections between the president and the oil company, no evidence has ever been presented against her, though a lot has been already established against her party comrades.

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In November of that year, even before Rousseff's inauguration and the outbreak of the economic crisis, the opposition was already calling for her ouster; they could not accept the fact she had won the elections. Throughout 2015, as the economic crisis worsened, the government's main supporting parties — the Progressive Party (PP), Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB) and Workers' Party (PT) — saw themselves directly affected by so-called Operation Car Wash, dedicated to investigating corruption schemes linked to the state oil company, Petrobrás. In December, the president of the Lower House, Eduardo Cunha, [saw himself at risk of losing his position](#) due to an investigation opened by the Ethics Committee, which found many (non-declared) bank accounts under his name in Switzerland. Just one day after that discovery, he accepted the request to open impeachment proceedings against Ms. Rousseff, which had been prepared by lawyers connected with the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), the main opposition party.

It could be argued that the impeachment procedure followed legal formalities. However, there were many controversial Supreme Court rulings on the matter. The Court refused to consider possible illegalities during the voting process, for example. This led to the claim that it favored impeachment.

In fact, following the acceptance of the impeachment by Congressman Eduardo Cunha, respect for due process was simply dismissed by some public agents responsible for conducting Operation Car Wash. Among the many illegalities, the telephone privacy of the president had been broken and her conversations leaked to mainstream media outlets.

The impeachment and its plot

To assert that an impeachment, if approved by parliament and confirmed by the courts, can never be placed under suspicion is no less than a fallacy. It says nothing about whether the process itself is just superficially legal, driven by secret — and illegitimate — reasons.

In fact, following the acceptance of the impeachment by Congressman Eduardo Cunha, respect for due process was simply dismissed by some public agents responsible for conducting Operation Car Wash. Among the many illegalities, the telephone privacy of the president had been broken and her conversations leaked to mainstream media outlets.

The political commotion that followed the phases of the Operation, which had involved politicians from various parties, facilitated the social mobilization that lent some legitimacy to the conspiracy of economic and political elites against the President. Indeed, as we can chronicle from articles published in *Estado de São Paulo*, Brazil's largest newspaper, the ousting of the president was orchestrated with great care. In a piece published one day before the vote in the Lower House, the newspaper pointed out that "Over the course of a year, between April of last year and April of this year, [...] federal deputy Heráclito Fortes (PSB-PI) gathered, in his house in the South Lake, in about two dinners per month, a group of experienced and influential parliamentarians from the opposition to discuss the economic-political crisis and, especially, possible ways of ousting the president Dilma Rousseff."

The mobilization of various opposition sectors, over months, for a large demonstration on March 13, 2016, with the support of the main media corporations, was crucial to facilitating the closed-door meetings in favor of impeachment. Afterwards, it became evident that the opposition parties directly financed the groups organizing this and other demonstrations, although those groups claimed to be spontaneous independent movements "against corruption." Just a few days before the demonstration, on March 9, a dinner with nine key figures from the PSDB and the PMDB sealed the future of the president. From this event onwards, the vice-president would openly articulate his support for impeachment, along with the political group that had been planning it for more than year. He would even involuntarily leak the rehearsal of this inauguration speech as interim president.

On April 5, the vice-president resigned his position as the president of his party, PMDB, and senator Romero Jucá, also investigated in Operation Car Wash, replaced him. From then on, Jucá became the man authorized to act in the name of the vice-president, making agreements and offering offices in the future government in exchange for votes in favor of impeachment.

In [recordings](#) made without his consent in March 2016, the president of PMDB, Senator Romero Jucá, well-known as the [main proponent](#) of impeachment, made explicit reference to the plot and made a pact with the most important bodies of the Brazilian state in favor of deposing President Rousseff.

The impeachment and its plot contd...

The voting session to authorize the beginning of the impeachment procedure in the Lower House, on April 17, was a [spectacle of its own](#). Besides the absurd reasons given by the deputies to vote in favor of opening the procedure, it became irrefutable that the impeachment had nothing to do with investigating crimes of responsibility supposed committed by the President. Important here is the fact that most of the deputies had already declared their votes to various media outlets. The decision was not taken in the Lower House at the time of voting, but Ms. Rousseff's fate had already been decided beforehand.

On May 11, the majority of the Senate confirmed the Lower House's decision, therefore removing the president from office for a maximum period of 180 days while the merits of the case are examined.

The interim government, led by the Vice-President, was formed, in great part, by [sectors of the opposition who had lost the election to Ms. Rousseff](#). It also has large involvement by the MPs who had participated in the plotting dinners organized by Deputy Heráclito Fortes.

The revelations of May 23 ground even more firmly the claim that the whole thing was a concerted plot.

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In these recordings, Jucá talks to Machado, an MP concerned with being caught in Operation Car Wash, and says: "I talked to some ministers in the Supreme Court. They say 'look, it is possible to [inaudible] only without her [Dilma]. While she is there, the press, the guys want to get rid of her, this shit will never stop'. Got it? So... I am talking to the generals, the military commanders. Everything is quiet, the guys say they will guarantee. They are monitoring landless and other movements. They are not going to disturb."

By now it has become clear that the motivations for the ousting of President Rousseff [were neither](#) her involvement in corruption scandals nor any criminal practices. The only reason for her to be impeached was the agreement by the most [corrupt political oligarchies](#) in the country that she must go. Their reasons probably varied, ranging from the simple intention of paralyzing investigations against themselves to the desire to attain power after losing four presidential elections in a row.

Why it was a coup

While the impeachment is a political process, it requires a juridical argument. For that political process move forward, it is necessary to produce evidence that the president committed a "crime of responsibility," and, with a clear and specific intention to do so. Along these lines, it is not sufficient to simply claim that she was silent in the face of some illegal activity; there has to be proof of her involvement in these actions and of her definitive intention to carry them out. None of this has been demonstrated thus far. Quite to the contrary, Ms. Rousseff's government has had a notorious, and historically exceptional, positive attitude towards investigations carried out by the Federal Police and the judiciary, demonstrating no attempt to interrupt or stop them. This was the main reason why various sectors of the opposition formed an alliance to impeach her: they needed to [stop the investigations](#) and prosecutions before these caught up to them, and this would not be possible as long as Ms. Rousseff remained in power.

Coups d'état need not always be carried out by military forces. They may also be accomplished by political sectors. According to a [well-known Brazilian dictionary of politics](#), what defines a coup d'état is that it is executed by state actors in violation of constitutional processes and without popular participation.

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If a coup d'état consists of conspiring to take power without the popular vote, it is hard to call the recent political events in Brazil by any other name.

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ACMA - TURKISH STYLE SOFT BAGELS



Acma, Turkish style soft bagels have always been one of the favorite Turkish style breakfast treats at home for us. It is also a delicious snack you can enjoy with cup of tea, Turkish cay, all day long. I had a chance to recreate these delicious bagels at home recently, everyone enjoyed them. Hope you enjoy making Acma at home!

Serves 6

Ingredients & Instructions

7 gr (1 pack) of instant dried yeast
 4 fl. oz. / ½ cup luke warm milk
 2 fl. oz. / ¼ cup luke warm water
 15 ml / 1 tbsp. sugar
 4 fl. oz. / ½ cup light olive oil
 238 gr / 2 cups / 8 oz. + 1 tbsp. all-purpose plain flour
 ½ teaspoon sea salt
 To finish / glaze:
 1 egg, beaten
 15 ml / 1 tbsp. Sesame seeds – optional

Preheat oven to 200 C / 400 F

Combine the yeast with warm water in a bowl, stir well and let the yeast dissolve for a few minutes. Add the sugar, warm milk and the olive oil to the mixture, stir for the sugar to dissolve.

Sift the flour in a large bowl and stir in the salt. Make a well in the middle and pour in the yeast mixture.

Combine and knead the dough for a few minutes; you will get lovely, soft dough. Cover the dough with a cling film and tea towel and leave to rise at a warm spot (near an oven or in a warm airing cupboard works well) for 2 hours. The dough will double in size.

Once doubled in size, divide the dough into 6 balls. One at a time, roll each dough ball between your palms to make it about 16 cm / 6 inches long. Then swirl and roll and seal the two ends together. Repeat this with the rest of the dough balls.

Place the Acma rolls on a baking paper on a tray, making sure there are minimum 1 inch / 2.5 cm. between each Acma roll, as they will expand while baking. Brush with the egg mixture and sprinkle sesame seeds over the top if you'd like.

Bake in the preheated oven (200 C / 400 F) for 10 minutes. Then turn the heat down to 190 C / 375 F and bake for another 10 minutes or until the Acma has a rich, golden color.

On my travels I have photographed many enchanting creatures.
Here are portraits of stray cats with attitude.
Enjoy the beauty of Nature.



STRAY CATS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK ULYSEAS

“With Cats, some say, one rule is true:
Don’t speak till you are spoken to.
Myself, I do not hold with that —
I say, you should ad-dress a Cat.
But always keep in mind that he
Resents familiarity.
I bow, and taking off my hat,
Ad-dress him in this form: O Cat!
But if he is the Cat next door,
Whom I have often met before
(He comes to see me in my flat)
I greet him with an oopsa Cat!
I think I’ve heard them call him James —
But we’ve not got so far as names.”

— T.S. Eliot, *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*



Sylvester.



Clouded leopard on the prowl.



Go away.



An old friend of mine who drops in when hungry and demands to be fed, politely.



Joint family system.



Rambo.



Lone Ranger.



Relaxing after a meal of rice and fish at the local market.
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Dropped in for a handout, otherwise ignores me on the road.



Mister Suspicious
© www.liveencounters.net july 2016



New kid on the block.

Live encounters

Free online magazine from village earth
July 2016

